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STUDIES IN GERMAN LITERATURE IN THE
NINETEENTH CENTURY

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STUDIES IN GERMAN LITERATURE
IN
THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

BY
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New York
THE MACMILLAN COMPANY
LONDON: MACMILLAN & CO., LTD.
1903

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Set up, electrotyped, and published October, 1903.

ALBION L. D. W. M. M.
P. O. BOX 100, BOSTON.

Norwood Press
J. S. Cushing & Co.—Berwick & Smith Co.
Norwood, Mass., U.S.A.

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To My Wife

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PREFACE

THE present volume of *Studies* is not a History of German Literature in the Nineteenth Century. It is an attempt to trace the elements of democratic thought in some characteristic forms of this literature. Metaphysical and æsthetic problems were no less influential than those discussed in the following pages ; also the craving for beauty, without conscious reference to the problems of social life or speculative thought, had its influence on poetic activity. But the significant influence of political, civic, and social conditions has seemed more fundamental in a first volume of *Studies in German Literature in the Nineteenth Century*.

The writer unhesitatingly confesses that the present volume has been written with a strong bias. To measure the development of the German nation by ideals of American democracy, though not by standards of American living, has been his intention. For he has cherished the hope that the struggle of a people for democratic freedom might be an inspiration to those who would have the code of our living conform to the law of our ideals.

CAMBRIDGE, MASS.,

October 1, 1903.

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How could a poet ever tower,
If his passions, hopes, and fears,
If his triumphs and his tears,
Kept not measure with his people?

—LOWELL, *Commemoration Ode*.

STUDIES IN GERMAN LITERATURE IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTORY

NATIONALITY IN CONFLICT WITH PROVINCIALISM AND COSMOPOLITANISM

SCHILLER, WERNER

AT the beginning of the nineteenth century the German-speaking world possessed no national character. Its literature could not, therefore, express a national consciousness. Men were provincial or cosmopolitan. Germans they were not. With the nation disrupted into hundreds of principalities, virtually independent of each other, the sense of a common destiny or of common interests vanished from among the populace, and even the closest and most painstaking observer now finds it difficult to trace its shadowy existence.

The horizon of the individual German was at that time so constricted that it embraced little more than the affairs of family life. Even where circumstances most favored the development or retention of public spirit,—in the independent and semi-independent cities of the empire,—public spirit had so far waned, that as political units these cities had lost all vitality, and as financial or industrial centres, most of their pristine glory. Indeed, conditions were such that one might be justified in denying the existence of a “public” in those days.

The word “familiarism,” were we permitted to coin it, would suggest more aptly than “provincialism” the dominant trait of popular life. The idea of “home” had become so narrow, so absolute, and so prohibitive, that it was more of a curse than an

inspiration. Sentiment was born and bred of the interests of locality alone. Its range was consequently small and its quality, though often intense, none the less petty. It must, of course, be conceded that this tendency was to a large degree fostered by the lack of those facilities of quick intercourse which in our day have brought remote localities into close touch with each other. One of the salutary results of the development of transportation facilities and journalistic enterprise consisted in the breaking down of the barriers of local prejudice. On the other hand, the student of the industrial development of Germany is at once struck with the opposition which was aroused in the first half of the century by every suggested reform of the transportation system.

A second phase of this "familiarism" showed itself in the peculiar treatment of the home or family as the paramount institution in the social order. Civic ideals had small opportunity to develop in the consciousness of the people; the thought of political unity could find no lodgement. A German was, by force of his rearing, first of all a member of his family, guided and swayed by its interests and traditions, and only in the second instance a member of the particular state to which he owed allegiance. The fact that he was also a German was, therefore, a consideration of such remote importance that it had lost all value. This essentially patriarchal conception of the family found its logical analogy in the principle of government absolutism. Brought up from earliest childhood in the faith of patriarchal home control, the populace naturally accepted the same idea as a principle of state. Governments existed for their own sake rather than for the people. They were sacrosanct, just as the home represented a sacrosanct idea. Under these circumstances love of country could not flourish, not even of that narrower domain to whose ruler the individual was subject. At best a feeling of loyalty to or a sense of dependence upon the reigning family served as a makeshift for patriotism. Furthermore, barriers of caste had to no little degree been maintained by prejudices of family life. These barriers separated the populace into three distinct classes with few aims

or interests in common, and became fatal to any deep sense of patriotism. ★ The nobility, the bourgeoisie, and the peasantry could hardly have been more estranged from each other had they belonged to different races. Caste suppressed that generous impulse which unites members of the same race into a nation.

If these conditions are borne in mind, one may readily understand why it was possible for Germans to accede without murmur to the diplomatic scheming of certain of their rulers, and ally themselves to the standards of Napoleon in his invasion of their common country. Provincialism, particularism, and "familiarism," virtually amounted to segregation of individual types, and to disintegration of national unity through differentiation.

As a reaction against this tendency there had sprung up among the few a cosmopolitanism so unrestrained that even to-day we may well regard it with amazement. This reaction had in reality set in several decades before the eighteenth century closed, and found its first characteristic expression in the literary revolt of the seventies known as the Storm and Stress. But this movement had been premature and was doomed to at least temporary failure. For it was in its very nature a tremendous paradox.

Seeking to reconquer life for art, the young men of that day ★ were forced to realize that German life was a barren waste beyond the possibility of poetic glorification. They could perceive in it nothing suggestive of common ideals, and their writings could, therefore, reflect only their own bitter disappointment. Goethe and Schiller were in their youth the two great apostles of the new faith. But recognizing the futility of their efforts, they turned to Greek antiquity for the ideal form and to science and history for a more satisfying valuation of life.

But Rousseau and the French Revolution, Shakespeare and the stirring life of the English people, had thrown the pettiness of existence in the German lands into glaring relief. To find calm enjoyment in the contemplation or the ideal reconstruc- ★

tion of a newly discovered antiquity was given to but a few. Freedom became the watchword: Give us freedom from these intolerable limits set to all our striving and thinking; give us a broader field to work in than the narrow spheres in which our lives are confined; give us nobler ideals to stimulate our activities than the cramped conventions of our humdrum life.

★ In response to this cry, the Romantic School arose. It is little wonder that in their revolt the representatives of this school could be content with nothing less than the universe, and be inspired by no interests not primarily world historic in their nature. Universal sentiment, universal history, universal philosophy, universal literature, who would not at once associate these ideas with a Novalis, a Johannes von Müller, a Fichte and Schelling, the Schlegels and a Tieck? The brotherhood of all things living or dead, animate or inanimate, phenomenal or transcendental, was the lodestar by which they steered their course, and they summed it all up in the one term to them, therefore, of infinite significance: Nature.

It is not well to belittle the intrinsic value of such an all-comprehensive attitude toward life. Indeed the nineteenth century came to adopt as its highest and most effective standards much that was proclaimed by these early romanticists. More and more the best striving of the German people, as manifested in its literature, approximated to the essence of the romantic ideal.

The romanticists rejected the *characteristic* because it differentiates the individual from surrounding life, and extolled the *interesting* as the bond that makes him a part thereof. Unable to find a spiritual unity in the present, they sought it in a past arbitrarily reconstructed to conform to their subjective conceptions. Unable to find it in the organization of German life, they searched for it in humanity at large, and fell into fanciful generalizations. Balked by humanity, they turned to the cosmic universe, and here individual, fatherland, humanity, were lost in the mystic realms of the unknown.

Jean Paul occupies his unique position in German literature

because in his writings he combined the provincialism of everyday life and the cosmopolitanism of romantic speculation. The love with which he depicted the "Dutch still-life" of his countrymen was the heritage of the environment into which he was born and in which he was reared. *Quintus Fixlein* and *Siebenkäs* were the literary precipitates of German provincialism. On the other hand, the longing for escape from such a puny life inspired Jean Paul's *Campanerthal*. The soul immortal was its poetic motive. His humor sprang from a consciousness of these two extremes. But so great was the antithesis, it touched his humor with sadness.

One feels this most keenly in works like the *Flegeljähre* or *Titan*, in which the poet sought to contrast the extreme tendencies of German life. He himself said once: "I could ever discover only three ways to be happy. The first, which leads upward, consists in passing so far beyond the mists of life that all external life with its pitfalls (*wolfsgruben*), morgues, and lightning rods is seen only afar off lying there like bedwarped gardens of children. The second consists in falling down straight into the garden to build in a furrow our little nest, so that looking forth from this warm lark's nest, we likewise may see no pitfalls, morgues, or rods, but only waving blades, each one of which is for the bird's nest a tree and a sunshade and umbrella. The third way, which I hold to be the wisest, consists in alternating between the first and the second."

That under such conditions, patriotism should have been conspicuously absent in Jean Paul's writings, is only what we might expect. Indeed, he considered patriotism an obstacle to human usefulness. Nor did he stand alone in this attitude. Wieland, Herder, Goethe, Schiller, Fichte, and many others expressed similar opinions, and von Sybel was justified when he remarked of the period 1795-1805: "The leading men of the nation, the great poets and thinkers, were convinced that patriotism was a limitation and that æsthetic culture and cosmopolitanism (*weltbürgertum*) were the only calling for a true man." ✱

But Schiller? Was not Schiller a patriot? Was not Schiller's

Tell the poetic precipitate of the longing of a nation for national being?) Literary history must reply in the negative. Schiller was not a German patriot, nor was he conscious of phrasing in *Tell* a specifically German desire for national unity and national greatness. Nothing could have been farther from Schiller's mind than to make actual contemporary conditions the object of his artistic musings or the content of his poetic productions. This he had attempted in the Storm and Stress of his youth when he gave to the world works like *The Robbers* and *Love and Intrigue*. The classical ideal meant, for Schiller, a breaking with all such attempts. He came to create first of all his world of the ideal and then sought to embody this creation in terms of the real. "It is," he once wrote, "the privilege and duty of the philosopher, as it is that of the poet, to belong to no nation and to no time, rather in the fullest meaning of the term to be the contemporary of all times." His letters written at the time *Tell* was assuming dramatic form seldom refer to national problems, and the few allusions thereto reveal a spirit almost of irritation at the threatened disturbance of the quiet seclusion of his life and the consequent distraction of his poetic inspiration and energies.

Still it is true that the poetic activity of Schiller soon came to be looked upon as consciously patriotic. *Tell* was shortly to be regarded as the poetic glorification of national aspirations of the German people. This popular estimate has made of Schiller the great prophet of national unification. But in its last analysis it rests upon Schiller's sane conception of the idea of moral and political freedom.

Tell was the poetic articulation of a philosophic theory of personal and political freedom. Had not Shakespeare's *Julius Cæsar* galvanized this theory into poetic vitality, Schiller's drama would not have been written. Schiller was not inspired by any prophetic insight into German striving which promised enfranchisement of his people from the principle of exclusive individuality.

Schiller held to the view that individuality is as much inclusive as exclusive, and that only the instinctive recognition of

a coördinate relation to environing forms of life can set the individual free. Schiller's sane theory of national freedom and of its necessary postulates later made it seem as if *Tell* had been written with an eye to German conditions. For the spirit of the popular uprising that made possible the wars of liberation was a practical confirmation of his theory.

Though not a conscious prophecy of the coming awakening, *Tell* was a happy augury of a more generous organization of German life. It was an omen of fair promise for a German poet to give dramatic life to the following propositions:—

The people, and not the government, constitute the state, and, accordingly, the character of the populace, and not the form of government, determines the quality or extent of political freedom.

The character of the populace is fixed by the character of its individual members, and if their instincts of life are in accord with the rational law of their collective existence, then such populace is a free people and its members are free men. Whenever any artificial restraints or limitations are placed upon this free and instinctive living, then tyranny exists and the people are not only justified in revolting, but will inevitably do so.

It was the clear poetic enunciation of these principles that made Schiller's last completed drama such a source of inspiration to the Germans when they came to feel themselves as one people having a distinct character of its own, capable of willing as a great unit and of desiring the same great ends. Germans fighting for their liberties justly conceived the fundamental idea of *Tell* to be "unity," and though the ideal of the poet was formulated on a broad cosmopolitan basis and perhaps took too little regard of racial lines and wittingly none of the dramatist's own nation, still it embraced nationality and could be made applicable thereto.

One must of course regret that Schiller's drama was inspired by purely academic ideals, since its artistic value was thereby largely impaired. The drama was built up logically, in accord with the logical nature of the philosophical ideal to be expressed. Only Schiller's philosophical idea can justify the scene at the

death-bed of Attinghausen, or the subplot between Bertha-Rudenz, or the confronting of Tell with John the Regicide in the last act, or even the magnificent soliloquy of Tell. There can be no doubt that these parts of the drama are necessary to the complete expression of the philosophic idea and that the poetic skill displayed is remarkable. But there can be as little doubt that they lessen the dramatic beauty of the whole play and retard the dramatic action.

Schiller was a Suabian by birth and training, and the Germans of the Southwest were of all Germans the least national in spirit. Not only is this shown by the fact that the principalities of this section made common cause with Napoleon, for which action, to be sure, the diplomatic scheming of their rulers might serve as a palliating excuse, but it is even more convincingly demonstrated by the easy denationalization of the lands on the left bank of the Rhine. The cosmopolitanism of Schiller was, therefore, in a way characteristic of the general indifference prevalent throughout the Southwest.

This indifference to national problems had also permeated Prussia. But the political importance which this country attained through Frederick the Great, and the solidarity of the Prussian State which his rule created, had engendered in the populace a feeling of respect for their own particular land and developed in the individual a keen sense of loyalty. The Prussian "felt his oats."

However, the apparent political power of Prussia and its ultra-patriarchal system of government made the educated classes complacent, and the masses indifferent, in matters of state. The people lived in blind confidence, which was no longer justified by the present. In his *Memoirs*, Steffens refers repeatedly to the rather absurd assurance with which his own fears of the growing power of Napoleon were brushed aside by his acquaintances. The strength of the state was sapped by this complacency and indifference.

Properly directed and energized, Prussian ideals were, however, inherently capable of sustaining the idea of national unity and of realizing the idea in practice. Prussia was, therefore,

destined to take the lead in the national movement of the century. And in Prussia we find the first conscious effort to draw upon the national life of the people for poetic inspiration, — Zacharias Werner's early dramas.

It is with some hesitation that one speaks of Zacharias Werner in the same breath with Friedrich Schiller. Mystical, fantastic, morally irresponsible, he was the *bête noire* of German literature. Not to conceive a strong bias against the man is impossible, and since his writings were the immediate precipitate of his life, it is not strange that they have found few to do them justice. Among the critics of his own country he has, as if by tacit agreement, been relegated to oblivion, and the only appreciative criticisms of his poetry were written by foreigners.

Werner was swept along by the great wave of cosmopolitanism that surged over Germany at the close of the eighteenth century. Rousseau was his idol whom he worshipped as a second saviour of mankind. Possibly nothing that he wrote so clearly expressed his boundless and vague cosmopolitanism as his ode to *The Passing Century*, beginning with the stanza: —

Mit ernsten Blicken steht an des Jahrhunderts Rande
Der Menschenfreund versenkt in sinnendem Gefühl —
Vor seinen Augen strahlt ein ungeheures Ziel,
Beinah' erreicht! Er sieht zahllose Sklavenbände,
Die durch Jahrhunderte das Erdenvolk gedrückt,
Vom Genius der Zeit mit mächt'ger Hand zerknickt.¹

No one can read or study Werner's first drama, *The Sons of the Valley*, without gaining the profound conviction that the poet had no eye for the detail of human life and no conception of the regenerative force of true patriotism.

Werner's mystical romanticism embraced, however, two elements of direct vital significance for the rebirth of national patriotic sentiment.

¹ A hundred years! And from their height with musing gaze,
The friend of man looks out into a future vast,
Before his eyes a glorious day in lustrous haze
About to break! Uncounted fetters of the past
He sees — that held the human race in bondage's sway —
Soon snapped and broken by the genius of that day.

The religious element was the first of these.

When a man identifies art and religion with such fervent enthusiasm as did Werner, and steeps his works in spiritual sensuality that places the divine upon a level with the carnal, the modern spirit may refuse to accept his conception as the highest form of religion, but it must concede the presence of a high-wrought religious sentiment. And it was precisely religious fervor of the kind that pulsed in Werner's first dramas, call it religiosity if you wish, which a decade later became a national factor in German life. Napoleon failed to gauge its force, and when it invested the wars of liberation with the glamour of divine ordination, his battalions met a foe they could not withstand.

A second element was Werner's sense of historic unity.

The romanticists looked at human life as merely one phase of all inclusive nature. For them the regeneration of mankind depended on restoring to the race the vital sense of its intimate oneness with all phenomenal life. One of the immediate results of this view was a highly stimulated historic sense. Since these men were Germans, the practical consequence was a rekindled interest in the historic past of the German people. It is true that the glorification of the Middle Ages was carried to extremes; but the fact that mediæval Germany became the burden of the romantic song must not be lightly disregarded, for it played a most important part in renationalizing the German lands.

Fully eight years before Achim von Arnim wrote his dedicatory poem for the "Christian-German Table Round," a patriotic organization, Werner conceived in his drama *The Cross on the Baltic* the historic conflict between the rugged heathen of the Baltic and the Teutonic Knights. He did so, moreover, in the same spirit which led Arnim to make this historic past the introductory motive of his poem.

Out of this conflict Werner saw rising the Prussia of his day. For the first time a Prussian poet turned to the history of his own country and centred his vision on the past of his own people, seeing in this past a justification of his philosophy of

the present. Past and present appeared to him as an organic unit and as integral parts of the great drama of Teutonic life still being enacted.

There is little evidence that Werner had mapped out any comprehensive scheme for the dramatization of Teutonic civilization when he first set to work at *The Cross on the Baltic*. But that he was inspired by the thought of German unity, vague and mystical though its phrasing, cannot be successfully disputed. As he progressed with the drama, he seems to have seen more clearly the historic basis of this unity.

Before Part II of *The Cross* was completed he began to dramatize what he considered a second critical moment in Teutonic life: the Reformation. *Martin Luther* was primarily intended to present in dramatic garb the second step taken by Teutonic life toward the realization of true religion. But the national element claimed so large a share of the poet's attention that it saved him from the poetic banality of contemporary romanticists like Tieck or the Brothers Schlegel. Metaphysical though the basis of *Martin Luther* was, the first four acts remained comparatively free from mystic-allegorical allusions, which Werner had introduced in *The Cross*, and which made his last historical dramas well-nigh unpalatable.

Werner's consciousness of nationality made possible the sympathetic and wholly poetic symbolism of the opening scene in the mines at Freiberg. It gave such character as there is to the figure of Luther, and helped Werner draw the realistic portraits of the German princes in the play against the background of a foreign rule. It did even more than this—it made the drama in some respects more directly prophetic of coming events than was Schiller's *Tell*. Schiller could not have conceived the episode in Act III, 3, where the imperial sceptre falls from the hands of the emperor as he gazes lost in thought at Luther, and is then picked up by the elector of Brandenburg. Only a Prussian poet, and one feeling the racial unity of the German lands, could at that time have conceived the thought of a United Germany under Prussian lead, and phrased even in such a passing incident the hope of future generations.

Of still greater significance is Werner's conception of Luther. The importance of Luther for German life of the next generation and for German freedom could hardly have been presented with greater truth had Werner written his drama decades later. The Luther depicted by Werner at the Diet of Worms was the Luther who inspired the youthful fighters for German unity. Werner's drama was forgotten, but for all that the Luther of later youthful patriots was hardly more than a replica of Werner's sturdy exponent of German liberties at Worms.

Thus the *Cross on the Baltic* and *Martin Luther* were, the second more so than the first, directly controlled or at least influenced by the poet's consciousness of the racial homogeneity of the German people. In this both dramas differed from Schiller's *Tell*. Werner seems intuitively to have read Schiller's drama in the light of its later interpretation, and to have felt the national significance of the Swiss revolt where Schiller failed to do so.

Notwithstanding this fact Werner's dramas were forgotten, Schiller's drama became a constant inspiration to all Germans. No doubt Schiller's far greater poetic, more particularly dramatic, technique will in part account for the survival of his drama. But Werner's dramatic talent was also of no mean order. He was thoroughly conversant with the practical requirements of the stage. In all his dramas—with the possible exception of the *Sons of the Valley*—he proved that he had a keen eye for stage-effect and a sure instinct for dramatic motivation. But Schiller's poetic technique was backed by a thoroughly sane cosmopolitanism, Werner's only by mystical sensuality. And this prevented the latter from taking a truly wholesome interest in human life. It perverted the spirit of nationality which Napoleon's victory at Austerlitz (December 2, 1805) had aroused in the man.

Werner assigned the political tribulations of Germany to religious indifference. Since the Germans were not fired by his religious sensuality, he convinced himself that the conflicts of his day were but the birth-throes of a new religious life. He could therefore interpret political upheavals only in the

light of his mystical metaphysics. Justly castigating German particularism and lack of unity, he insisted with blind perversity that both were caused by a lack of faith. He told his countrymen that their misfortunes were just, and should as such be borne in patience. If they returned to the faith, Werner's religious sensualism of course, and allowed it to vitalize their living, there would be hope for the future.

Such views were not only back of his dramatic conceptions, they permeated them. They made impossible any consistent dramatic formulation of the national ideal stirring within him and just rousing to semiconsciousness in the breast of his countrymen.

The Cross and *Luther* were written before the final catastrophe overtook Prussia, at a time when even a Fichte could deliver his lectures on *Grundzüge des gegenwärtigen Zeitalters* and could claim that the fatherland of the freemen was not determined by (political or geographical) racial limits or conditions, but that it was there where "light and right" happened to be most abundant.

Attila, Werner's next drama, was conceived and written after the German states had, one and all, succumbed to the military genius and political dexterity of Napoleon. Through national misfortune Fichte was brought to realize the redeeming quality of noble patriotism. Not so Werner. He conceived an intense hatred for Napoleon, the oppressor of his country, and dubbed him the "normal" tyrant. But his metaphysical religiosity had given a fatalistic bent to his philosophy. He contented himself with the thought that Napoleon was the "scourge of God" sent to mete out just punishment upon a generation wandering from the true faith. In the subjugation of Europe by Attila and in his attack upon Christian Rome, Werner recognized the historic prototype of the Napoleonic mission. According to Werner's interpretation, Rome was saved through the living faith of Pope Leo, and the dramatist would have his countrymen believe that their political salvation depended upon a similar, ecstatic religious life.

Logically carried out, Werner's idea of developing in a series

of dramas the historic crises in the course of Teutonic civilization should have led to a drama realistically presenting the ideal content of contemporary conditions. But the dead weight of metaphysical speculation prevented this step. Werner was not content with a large metaphysical background ; instead, he made the fatal mistake of endeavoring to express directly in his dramas the content of his speculations. Abstract ideas were forced into the forms of dramatic agents and stalked across the stage in the masquerade of human beings, yes, of bloodless, mechanical spectres. Thus in *Attila* the whole paraphernalia of Werner's erotic transcendentalism was brought into play. The minstrel-ghost of *The Cross* reappeared as Pope Leo, through whom Attila (self-centred humanity) and Honoria (mystical spirituality) are united. Significantly enough this means death, as it did in *The Cross*—death as the rapturous reunion in the infinite.

Such supernal dramatic nonsense is sufficient to condemn the whole drama, and it is easy to see why the dramatic attempts of Werner have been relegated to oblivion. It is a pity this should have been the outcome of his striving. For *Attila*, the man of destiny, self-centred and conscious of his mission, yet withal intensely human and therefore lonely and in his loneliness struggling with ever rising doubts ; *Attila*, the representative of sturdy German realism,—a fitting companion figure to the Luther of the Diet-scene at Worms,—sweeping down upon an effete civilization, reconquering life and making possible a new era in the world's progress,—this *Attila* is an attractive conception instinct with dramatic possibilities. But Werner was unable to carry it out in clear outlines. The interest of the poet in concrete facts as the phenomenal manifestations of ideas had become blunted. The success of Napoleon was an established fact, therefore a divine dispensation to be accepted in patience.

The Cross and *Luther* showed distinct traces of historic inspiration, *i.e.* of an imagination seeking, vaguely, no doubt, to reconstruct historic facts in a more complete image of ideas suggested thereby. *Attila*, however, was purely the result of

the application of preconceived notions to historic facts. Not facts, but notions, suggested or inspired the drama. Werner was no longer developing his peculiar philosophy; it had become fixed, and controlled him absolutely. His following dramas, *Wanda*, *Kunegunde*, *The Mother of the Maccabees*, descended to the level of dramatic drivel.

Werner's dramas were characteristic products of a transition period in German life. The Napoleonic reign brought the vague cosmopolitanism of the Romantic School face to face with the stern duties of everyday life, and confronted æsthetic religiosity with the problems of civic morality and national destiny. Fichte, because of his manhood, saw his new duty; Werner, because of his lack of manhood, forfeited his opportunity. His became the unenviable distinction of setting the fashion for a new kind of dramatic monstrosities. Werner's *Twenty-fourth of February* was, to be sure, not solely responsible for the flood of "fate tragedies" which poured its turgid waters over the German stage during the second decade of the nineteenth century; but it helped to raise the floodgates by supplying a peculiar dramatic form that accorded with the vague unrest of the times. Symptomatic of German life, this drama was more especially characteristic of Werner's downward career; as poetry it was impossible, as a drama it attempted to phrase the impossible as possible and the accidental as unavoidable.

CHAPTER II

THE BIRTH OF GERMAN NATIONAL UNITY

POETRY STRUGGLES TO EXPRESS POTENTIAL IDEALS OF NATIONAL LIFE

HEINRICH VON KLEIST

IN Werner it was possible to trace the partial temporary emancipation of a poetic gift which the mystical speculation of earlier life had perverted. This emancipation, so far as it went, was effected by the threat of national affliction. When this affliction actually befell, Werner was unable to see in it anything but a crisis in the religious life of the nation. Instead of sharpening his vision of concrete affairs, it dulled it. Werner's dramas became less human, less real, less the embodiment of the world of sense reflecting eternal verities. Mystical speculation now swayed him completely and destroyed dramatic verisimilitude. Werner perished as a poet, and he perished as a man. There is no tragic note in this process. It is hardly even sad. We fail to perceive any evidence of a struggle against the fate that overtook him. All the evidence points to a weak character revelling in its weakness.

From Werner one turns with a sense of relief to his contemporary, Heinrich von Kleist. He, too, met shipwreck in life ; but the poet saved the freight for which he had toiled.

Superficially considered both men had much in common. Kleist, like Werner, was born in Prussia, and, like Werner, he felt that social conditions could not continue as they were. In his rather vague humanitarianism he dreamed of a magnificent regeneration of mankind. Like Werner, his poetic talent was dramatic, and the best it produced we owe to the awakening of the consciousness of nationality. But here the analogy between the two poets ends.

Werner was Kleist's senior by nine years. Long contact with the cosmopolitanism of the last decades of the eighteenth century had infected his habit of thought and imagination. Kleist, too, felt the debilitating influence of German cosmopolitanism. But before it could become fatal, Napoleon began to move against Germany. For Kleist the national catastrophe came early enough to be an effective antidote. It was possible for him to feel the direct inspiration of national patriotism. This was refracted in his poetry through the personality of the man. With Werner patriotic inspiration was indirect, *i.e.* it came to him already refracted by his mystical ideas, and could therefore exert no truly reforming influence on his poetry.

Kleist was born of a noble Prussian family, for whom the ethics of life were summed up in the principle *noblesse oblige*. Limited in its worldly possessions, the family prized the more its traditions and ideals. To these the young man at first submitted and chose in accordance therewith the military career. At Berlin and Potsdam, he came under the influence of modern thought. Metaphysical problems as propounded by Kant, and social theories as vitalized by Rousseau, so engaged his interest that he soon found himself a stranger among his immediate associates. The military life palled on him; its ethics seemed a farce, and he resigned his commission. Even at this early age two ideals dominated his relation to life: to know the truth and to acquire wisdom.

Knowledge of the truth meant, however, for Kleist, the perception of the destiny of man in this life *and* in the life hereafter. Acquisition of wisdom he interpreted as a process of training enabling man to work intelligently for the furtherance of this destiny. Kleist's metaphysical bent and his deep-rooted sympathy for the actualities of life led to this double creed.

As an officer at Potsdam he studied philosophical systems, but also history and mathematics. After his discharge, he devoted himself to these studies, and his sad experiences of the following years were due to his faulty understanding of Kant's idealism and his largely sentimental leaning toward Rousseau's

doctrines. For Kant's idealism made, so he thought, the rational perception of truth impossible and robbed him of his ideal. The new mystery of existence became a fateful, oppressive burden, which he sought to cast aside by travel, hoping to find some new ideal that would give new purpose to his life. Inordinately sensitive by nature, he felt most keenly the discord and shallowness of life, and with Rousseau he longed for the better day. To help speed its coming became something of a passion with him. But how? If it is impossible to know the purport of life, how can one labor for the good of mankind? If the good is unknowable, may not all our toil be for the worse rather than the better?

This ferment made a poet of Kleist. Unable to find the ideal in the real, yet conscious that it must root in the real, all his yearning sought relief in poetry, and he set his heart upon writing a great drama, in which the ideal he sought should attain reality. This drama was his *Robert Guiskard*. Only a fragment has come down to us. He intended it to be the "good deed" for mankind of which he dreamed, and the vain efforts of the poet to satisfy these lofty intentions are the tragic theme in the story of the first period of his poetic development. He strove to solve the metaphysical problem of human life through the poetic imagination applied directly to the facts of life, in this particular drama, to the story of Robert, the Norman Guiskard.

During the four years that Kleist stood under the ban of this ideal, problems of national import touched him only superficially. His first concern was the great problem of human life. The two dramas written and completed in this time, *The Family Schrockenstein* and *The Broken Jug*, were therefore conditioned by the metaphysical brooding of Kleist and his rather sentimental revolt against conventional forms of living. *The Family Schrockenstein* pointed to Kant, *The Broken Jug* to Rousseau. The real stuff, however, which Kleist put into dramatic form was his personal observations of German life. The nature of these observations and the keenness of his vision make it possible for us to understand the inspired patriotism of his poetry of later years.

In December, 1801, Kleist returned from Paris whither he had

gone with his sister in a vain search for new inspiration. Distracted in mind, he now bade farewell to "the gaudy trumperies of life: nobility, caste, honor, wealth." From the conventions that hedged in the society of his own country, he fled to Switzerland, foolishly imagining that morbid sentiment is a cure for morbid thought. His mood was bitter, more bitter because his betrothed saw the folly of his action and refused to accompany him.

In this mood he sketched the outlines and first draft of *The Family Schroffenstein*. For the bearers of the dramatic action Kleist chose two branches of the same family. According to an ancient compact, the property of the branch first becoming extinct was to revert to the other, thus giving to the survivor a larger power than was possessed by a third branch. However, instead of constituting a bond between the interested parties, the compact leads to misunderstanding and open hostility. Both sides forfeit the ability of judging occurrences by a higher and more just standard than that of narrow family interests. Clannish prejudices control reason and imagination, and doom both families to extinction.

Perhaps the most significant figure in the drama is John, the illegitimate son of one of the hostile counts. Being illegitimate, he is free from the prejudices of family tradition. But he cannot escape the consequences of the feud. In reality, he is the greatest sufferer. As imaginative, sensitive, morbid, unhappy as Kleist himself, John is repulsed by the moral limitations of his surroundings, and overwhelmed by his sense of utter loneliness. He craves the redeeming love of woman :—

Auf dieser Burg — mir kommt es vor, ich sei
In einem Götzentempel, sei ein Christ,
Umringt von Wilden, die mit grässlichen
Gebärden mich, den Haaresträubenden,
Zu ihrem blut'gen Fratzenbilde reissen.¹

¹ Inside these palace walls, I feel I were
Within a heathen temple, were a Christian
By savages beset, with frightful gestures
Intent to thrust me, fear- and horror-stricken,
Into their grewsome idol's bloody arms.

— *The Family Schroffenstein*, Act I, 1.

And this heathen temple is his home, these savages are his kindred, and their idol is the hatred born of family bias. Kleist's wail at the hopelessness of Kantian idealism took the form of a cynical commentary on the suicidal clannishness of German life.

But Kleist never put the last loving touches to his first work. Its hopelessness and cynicism were too much at variance with the ideal he was seeking in *Robert Guiskard*. Nobler impulses destroyed his interest in *The Family Schroffenstein*. The anguished cry of Count Sylvester, "God of justice, speak plainly to man that he may know what to do!" came from the heart of the poet. The cynicism of Kleist's drama was born not of unbelief in the possibility of a better order of life, but of inability to perceive the redeeming qualities of contemporary society.

The Family Schroffenstein voiced, therefore, notwithstanding its metaphysics, a strong protest against the supremacy of the family ideal. *The Broken Jug* brought an equally strong, though more temperate and less cynical, protest against the pettiness of everyday life.

Congenial friends at Zurich helped the poet to shake off his cynical, pessimistic mood, at least for the moment. He had eased his heartache in writing *The Family Schroffenstein* and could now contemplate the pettiness of social ideals with something like calm superiority. The personal equation was temporarily eliminated, and *The Broken Jug* was conceived under the inspiring touch of a renewed interest in life and a rekindled hope for something better.

It is one of the truest and most artistic comedies, if not indeed the most artistic comedy, in all German literature, and reveals Kleist's dramatic genius at its best. In only one other, his last drama, *The Prince of Homburg*, can one discover an equal emancipation of his dramatic genius. In *The Broken Jug* and *The Prince of Homburg*, Kleist succeeded in phrasing dramatically the suggestion derived from a given theme in the perfected form of the original theme.

The immediate inspiration of *The Broken Jug* was a simple etching hanging on the walls of the room where Kleist met

his friends. The pettiness of human life when hedged around by selfish aims of a humdrum existence has nowhere been more sympathetically depicted. How well the poet knows the foibles of village life, how deftly he has reproduced this life in all its limitations and inevitable self-destructiveness ! It is as if he called out to his countrymen : " Such are the trifles that engage your attention — the breaking of a mere jug, a cherished heirloom, sets you all agog. You have no interests large enough to lift any of you out of the narrow rut of your everyday existence, and so you have no quarrels important enough to keep justice untainted ; for the pettiness of your claims makes pettifoggers of your judges, and law becomes a tool in the hands of selfishness. And the upshot is : that you reveal yourselves to nobler-minded men as pitiful nonentities, at whose antics they can afford to smile because they know how much truer and deeper life's interests are."

This is wholesome literature. The note of hope rings out true and clear at the very outset, and sustains our sympathy amid the realism of life so drastically reproduced in the drama.

It will be seen that neither in *The Family Schrockenstein* nor in *The Broken Jug* national political problems were touched upon ; but some of the elements which brought about and prolonged the political disintegration of the nation were unsparingly reproduced.

The future was still veiled to the poet, but he trusted that it would compensate for the present. As long as Kleist was held enthralled by the vague cosmopolitan ideal of his *Robert Guiskard*, this future remained veiled. It is pitiful to observe how his genius swung back and forth between morbid idealism and morbid realism, all because his poetic vision could not pierce to the heart of things. The story of the following years is one of bitter disappointments. At the end of the first year we find him again in France, crushed in spirit, broken in health, at the verge of insanity. Again he wrestled in Paris with the problem of his *Guiskard*, destroyed what he had written, and set out, dazed and like a man in a dream, to join Napoleon's army of invasion and seek death in England. Recognized by

an acquaintance, he was sent back to Germany, and, totally indifferent to life, was now persuaded by his sister to enter the civil service. Once he had sworn never to put on the harness of bureaucratic employment, now he filled a petty assignment in Königsberg.

From the moment when the tragic recognition of his inability to satisfy the self-imposed demands of his "Guiskard" drama overwhelmed him in Paris, until the late fall of 1805, not merely the poet, but also the man, seemed to relapse into a state of lethargy. Out of this lethargy he was shaken by Napoleon and his threatening advance on Europe. When Napoleon attacked Austria (1805), the Prussian patriot awoke in Kleist. To his friend Rühle he wrote the following trenchant lines:—

"As matters now stand, one can look forward to hardly anything else but a glorious death. I should like to know what manner of warfare it is to begin by going into winter quarters and undertaking the tedious siege of a fortress! Are you not convinced, as I am, that the French will attack us, and will do so even in the course of the winter, if we continue only four weeks longer to stand thus with weapons in hand at the gateway of their retreat from Austria? How is it possible that any one should think of opposing such extraordinary forces with such a common and ordinary reaction! Why did not the king assemble his diet at the first violation of Franconian territory by the French, why not disclose to them in a touching speech—for his grief alone would have made it so—his position? If he had merely left it to their own sense of honor, whether they wished to be ruled by an abused and degraded king or not, would not a spark of national spirit have been enflamed within them? And if this spirit had manifested itself, would this not have been the proper moment to declare to them that it is not a question of ordinary warfare? That existence or non-existence is at stake, and if he could not increase his army by three hundred and fifty thousand men, nothing remained but an honorable death? Do you not believe that the creation of such an army would have been possible, if he had caused all his gold and silver-plate to be minted, had disposed of his chamberlains and horses, and if his whole family had followed this example, and he had then asked: What is the nation willing to do?—I know not how well he may now relish his food, served on silver platters, but this I do know: the emperor of Austria does not relish his!"

The letter continued with a forecast of the inevitable doom of the German states. It prophesied the establishment of a new German coalition under the elector of Bavaria as king and the sovereignty of Napoleon as emperor, and then burst into this sentence of the bitterest hatred for Napoleon, "Why cannot some one be found to put a bullet through the head of this evil genius of the world?" Immediately following this outburst of patriotism, Kleist returned to poetic activity. He resigned his position with the feeling of one stepping from prison life into freedom. "And now back again to life!" he wrote his friend Rühle shortly after. "As long as that lasts I shall write tragedies and comedies."

Before Kleist could respond to the challenge of all that was truly patriotic in him, it was necessary for him to make his reckoning with the past, to draw off the poetic balance-sheet, and close the old poetic ledger of debit and credit. Three unbalanced accounts called for settlement: his account with humanitarian day-dreams, with metaphysical speculation, and with æsthetic theories. It was no light task to acknowledge the loss and charge it up manfully against the account of poetic capital. The three works of his pen which performed this deed of self-discipline tell a story of intense mental suffering. *Michael Kohlhaas*, *Amphitryon*, and *Penthesilea*, the first a short story, the last two respectively comedy and tragedy, closed the old ledger.

Michael Kohlhaas was Kleist's last plea for larger human liberties, for enfranchisement of the instincts from the code of conventions and the formalism of the law. Following the old chronicle story of Hans Kohlhase, to which his friend Pfuel called his attention in Königsberg, he told in simple, but all the more impressive, words the tragic tale of ingenuous, straightforward sentiment warped and perverted by artificiality and injustice. The theme that inspired Schiller's *Tell*, was also the inspiration of Kleist's *Michael Kohlhaas*. When Tell exclaims: —

Gerächt hab' ich die heilige Natur!

he justifies not only his deed, but the deed of Kleist's Michael

Kohlhaas. Tell is forced to jeopardize the life of his son, and violence is done to his holiest instincts. In the same way violence is done to Kohlhaas's innate sense of justice when his rights are trodden under foot. Every human being has a holy of holies that no one may invade. In Schiller's drama this sentiment was chastened and defined by philosophic reasoning. In Kleist's story it burned with a fierce, steady sweep, regardless of rational barriers. There is something vague and yet awe-inspiring in the latter's production, something obscure and withal terribly convincing. The revolutionary passion of Schiller's *Robbers* has here the added dignity of a deeply realized truth. Through sturdy persistency Schiller learned to put clearness and exactness in the place of obscurity and uncertainty. Kleist was not built to grasp truth through any process of reasoning. He could only seek to embrace it by his feelings and realize it through his imagination. Schiller's conception of freedom became precise, Kleist's remained vague; but where Schiller convinces the reason, Kleist conquers the heart.

In those days of new hopes, Kleist wrote to his friend Rühle:—

"It cannot be an evil spirit which is at the head of the universe, it is only one not comprehended. Do not we also smile when children weep? Just think of this infinite continuance of existence! Myriads of æons, each in itself an existence, for each a phenomenal appearance like this world! . . . And the whole immeasurable firmament but a grain of dust compared with infinity! Tell me, is this a dream? Between two linden leaves, as we lie stretched on our backs in the evening dusk, a prospect opens up, a premonition comes to us, richer than thought can grasp or language express."

Here we find the imagination of Kleist roaming once more through the vast domain of truth, and this time wrestling with the metaphysical problem of life. But in the lines quoted there is none of that fearful despair which drove him forth from Frankfort and made of him a restless wanderer. At his own past suffering he could now smile sadly as at the weeping of a child, and in this mood he bade farewell to the last lingering hopes of former days. He transformed Molière's *Amphytrion* into an apotheosis of the pantheistic faith in a universal

teleology which his reason had failed to justify. Kleist's *Amphitryon* became the medium through which the poet rose superior to the conflict that had darkened his life.

The comedy sought to transform into dramatic action the conflict between the instinct that guides our human emotions and the will that would comprehend these emotions as emanations of an ultimate, universal reality. Is it possible — Kleist asks — to love, and yet, loving, to realize that the object of our love is but a phase incarnate of the Deity?

Siehst du ihn in der Abendröte Schimmer,
 Wenn sie durch schweigende Gebüsche fällt?
 Hörst du ihn beim Gesäusel der Gewässer,
 Und bei dem Schlag der tipp'gen Nachtigall?
 Verkündet nicht umsonst der Berg ihn dir,
 Getürmt gen Himmel, nicht umsonst ihn dir
 Der felszerstiebt Katarakten Fall?
 Wenn hoch die Sonn in Seinen Tempel strahlt
 Und von der Freude Pulsschlag eingeläutet,
 Ihn alle Gattungen Erschaff'ner preisen,
 Steigst du nicht in des Herzens Schacht hinab
 Und betest deinen Götzen an?¹

Technically speaking, *Amphitryon* is a comedy. But to read it and not feel the quiver of enforced resignation and the tremor of a long farewell is impossible. The great Sphinx with her two faces, human life and eternity, had baffled the philosophy of Kleist. She had also thus far baffled his poetry. That he recognized this also and had the strength to admit it

¹ Dost see him (i.e. *the Deity*) in the light of even-glow
 That falls aslant through still and silent bushes?
 Dost hear him in the flow of murmuring waters,
 Or in the nightingale's voluptuous song?
 Doth not the mount in vain proclaim to thee —
 Reared to the skies — his presence, and in vain
 The rushing fall of rock-burst cataracts?
 When from on high the sun streams in his temple
 And with the pulse beat of a new-born joy
 All species of creation sing his praise,
 Dost thou not seek thy heart's most secret chamber,
 And worship at thy idol's shrine? — *Amphitryon*, Act II, 5.

candidly to himself, that was his salvation. Openly he confessed his failure in *Penthesilea* and this tragedy became Kleist's swan-song, the last agonized leave-taking from his great dramatic ideal. All the heartache which the pursuit of this ideal had caused him was embodied in *Penthesilea*. With pitiless hand he opened the old wound and probing to its very depth found that it had penetrated to the seat of life:—

Das Aeusserste, das Menschenkräfte leisten,
Hab' ich gethan — Unmögliches versucht —
Mein Alles hab' ich an den Wurf gesetzt;
Der Würfel, der entscheidet, liegt, er liegt:
Begreifen muss ich's — und dass ich verlör.¹

Thus Kleist buried the hopes of previous years: the hope of solving the problem of life through poetic intuition; the hope of apprehending through successive dramatic visions the harmony portended by the conflicts of life; the hope of creating a new dramatic genre. That he possessed the technical ability to express poetically the visions of his imagination, admits of no doubt. The fragment of *Robert Guiskard* stands as a mighty monument to his poetic skill. But heretofore he had seen only the dark side of life. The "times were out of joint," and his metaphysical, cosmopolitan bent led him to look for the evidence of their readjustment in his own spiritual experience, rather than in the times themselves. The concrete reality of this evidence, so essential to poetic, especially dramatic, creativeness, escaped him. Then came the invasion of German soil by Napoleon. It saved Kleist's poetic genius. His vision became narrowed in a sense, since his gaze was withdrawn from the far away and centred on the near by; but he saw with greater exactness where he had felt vaguely though fervently. If heretofore his poetry had been realistic, it now became real.

¹ The utmost have I done that human strength
Can do; attempted the impossible;
My all I've staked upon a single throw;
The die that tells my fate is cast — is cast:
Confess this now I must — and that I've lost!

— *Penthesilea*, Scene IX.

His imagination dealt henceforth with the world of sense, moulding it into forms throbbing with the warm life of his personality.

Whether Kleist would have recognized the futility of his æsthetic and philosophic aspirations as clearly as he did, and would have possessed the strength to turn his back thereon if German national existence had not been threatened, is useless speculation. The fact remains that in Königsberg the conditions of German life began to interest him as manifestations of a national consciousness. Up to that time, he had felt himself, so to speak, merely an isolated fact amid the tremendous mass of conscious and unconscious phenomena constituting the universe. Suddenly this sense of isolation vanished, and Kleist saw himself as a constituent part of a national organism in which and through which the individual might free himself of the all too personal import of life, and find the substance of his longing gratified. This was the new hope that sprang up in his heart as a result of the French invasion of Austria. It was subsequently intensified by the French rule in Prussia and other German states. National life became a concrete ideal. It inhered in the actuality all about the poet. In it, as in a sublime harmony, humanitarianism and provincialism were banded together. This was the dramatic katharsis of his tragic visions.

No wonder Kleist sang enraptured of the glory and solidarity of German life in *Katie of Heilbron*; no wonder his heart was filled with passionate hatred and gave vent to this hatred in that dramatic slogan of national liberty, *Hermannsschlacht*, when the national existence of his people seemed doomed; no wonder he writhed under the supine policy of Frederick William III, and, in *The Prince of Homburg*, urged high and low to sink personal motives in the common purpose and find their true self in the full consciousness of this community of interests. And so it is no wonder that he finally lost his grip on life and missed the supreme consolation of his art when the times and his countrymen momentarily seemed to belie the reality of this new ideal. His suicide was not tragic, but tragic indeed was the fact that the seer was forced to doubt and disbelieve his own true vision.

It must not, however, be supposed that the dramatic activity of the last years of Kleist wholly disregarded the æsthetic and metaphysical problems which had previously thereto engaged his attention. Kleist's early fault of taking life and art—not perhaps too seriously, but at any rate too personally—was never wholly overcome. He always retained a deep interest in everything problematical as vitally affecting himself. It was the continued assertiveness of this personal factor which prevented even these last dramas from attaining poetic perfection. But speculative ideals, either as to art or life, were subordinated to a sympathetic observation of the concrete; they were colors—in *Katie of Heilbron*, almost the only colors—with which he painted his dramatic pictures of life. They were no longer the colored glasses through which he looked at life.

Katie of Heilbron was the most subjective of these last dramas. The character of the heroine was evolved from Kleist's subjective need, *i.e.* from his desire for the love of a woman so completely forgetful of self as to sink her own personality with childlike trust in the object of her love. Kleist's conception of womanhood does not agree with the modern ideal of womanhood. But this does not impair the poetic value of his conception. For under the magic touch of Kleist's genius Katie attained both dramatic consistency and dramatic reality. Poetically the conception stands justified. But the subjective source of Katie's character and of her relation to her lover, Count Wetter vom Strahl, was directly responsible for serious defects in the drama.

The most obvious, and therefore most criticised, of these is the makeshift solution of the plot. At the last moment it is discovered that Katie is the child, though to be sure the illegitimate child, of the emperor. Her the count may marry without fear of mésalliance. The theme he chose, brought Kleist, the sentimental Rousseauite, face to face with the conventions of his day, and he compromised. That he felt the inconsistency of the compromise and also the dramatic weakness of the solution, is proved very clearly by his labored efforts

to make the revelation of this imperial descent of his heroine plausible and acceptable.

His dramatic misgivings were furthermore reflected in the speech of Count Wetter at the beginning of Act II, a speech in which, wholly at variance with Kleist's usual manner, the following superfluous words were put into the mouth of his hero: "No, no, no, though I may love her, for my wife I do not desire her! I would join your proud circle.¹ That was a settled fact even before you came." If Kleist had not felt the conflict between simple human sentiment and the prejudices of social life, as a dramatic necessity, he surely would not have referred to it and excluded it from his drama in such a mechanical manner. Kleist had rejected caste. But it was a sentimental rejection and counted for little when the prejudices of birth demanded recognition. Caste was a recognized institution of his country, and Kleist was now beginning to stand for his country.

For this violence done to his own better instincts Kleist avenged himself by putting his whole soul into the creation of one of the most charming, winsome figures of the German stage. Not the slightest suggestion of her high birth is contained in the actions or the appearance of Katie. She is and remains to the end of the drama the simple, unaffected child of the people, and — with a fine irony — she is officially raised to the peerage not on account of the accident of her birth, but on account of her intrinsic nobility of character.

This shirking of the real dramatic conflict naturally deprived the piece of its dramatic effect. Two such magnificently drawn characters as Katie and her supposed father, Theobald Friedeborn, the sturdy old armorer of Heilbron, deserved a more consistent and convincing setting. Pity that the patriotic feeling which vitalized these should have devitalized the drama. For in the conception of these two characters, in particular of Katie's, Kleist for the first time found the form of his ideal suggested by the life of his own people. In folk-song and folk-legend there was revealed to him a conception of woman-

¹ That of his ancestors whom he sees in a sort of vision.

hood and womanly love that satisfied the troubled craving of his heart. In *Katie*, Kleist realized the womanly ideal of his countrymen, and they in turn have enshrined her in their hearts. In *Theobald* he immortalized German manhood. Independent and fearless, yet so loyal and generous, *Theobald* owed the bone and sinew of his being to Kleist's sympathetic recognition of the fundamental elements of German character. Later years proved how true had been his poetic insight.

Like *The Family Schroffenstein*, *Katie of Heilbron* was given to the world without having received the last loving touches at the hands of the poet. No sooner was *Katie* herself a living dramatic reality in his imagination, when Kleist grew indifferent to the finer motivation of the dramatic action and the beauty of its form. There was another reason for this indifference. The drama was conceived under the shadow of an impending national catastrophe; it was completed when the empire was no more. National life had been merely a setting for his *Katie*; now the setting interested the poet more than the jewels it held. *Herman* was conceived when *Katie of Heilbron* was being written.

Much of the prophecy contained in Kleist's letter to Rühle had come true. Bavaria, Württemberg, and numerous other principalities had severed (1806) their connection with the empire and combined as the so-called "Rheinbund" under the protectorate of Napoleon. The battle of Jena and Auerstädt (October 14, 1806) had been fought and lost. Berlin was occupied by the French, and the king of Prussia humbled (Peace of Tilsit, July 9, 1807). To all intents and purposes the constituent parts of the old empire had become French dependencies. Political intrigues and selfish ambitions of German rulers made concerted action impossible, and no true sense of patriotism was awake and active in the nation at large. Political bondage was the legitimate fruit. But this did not embitter Kleist toward his people. He tried to see beneath the surface, and his heart was warmed as never before to the great mass of his oppressed countrymen. In them he saw the salvation of Germany.

Shortly after the disastrous battle of Jena, Kleist wrote to his sister: "I feel easier and calmer than usual. It seems to me as if this common misfortune educates men. My experience is that they are growing wiser and more sympathetic and their views of life larger and deeper." When Napoleon invaded Austria, Kleist had wished that the king of Prussia would set an example of patriotism and thereby arouse the national spirit both in the common folk of Germany and in its princes. In his new drama he undertook to show that all that Germany needed was such an unselfish prince, a leader like Herman, the Cheruskan prince, liberator of the ancient Germans from the yoke of Rome. With almost historic exactness Kleist transferred the political jealousies and chicaneries of his own day into the period of his dramatic story. The energetic, self-effacing patriotism of Herman joins issue with these forces and wins the victory. Kleist was a true prophet. Six years later in the Wars of Liberation, the issue, stated dramatically by Kleist, was met by the Germans. Then the demand of Herman was fulfilled: —

Kurz, wollt ihr, wie ich schon einmal euch sagte,
Zusammenraffen Weib und Kind,
Geschirre, goldn' und silberne, die ihr
Besitzet, schmelzen, Perlen und Juwelen
Verkaufen oder sie verpfänden,
Verheeren eure Fluren, eure Heerden
Erschlagen, eure Plätze niederbrennen,
So bin ich euer Mann —.¹

Where the whole country is at stake, personal ambitions count for naught in the eyes of *Herman*. Unity among the princes of the realm requires the suspension of all intrigues looking

¹ In short, if you — as once before I've urged —
Will gather wife and child together,
Will melt what you possess of silver-plate
And gold, and taking all your pearls and precious stones,
Sell or dispose of them by pawn,
Lay waste your fields, annihilate your herds,
Apply the torch to village and to home —
Then I'm your man ! — *Hermannsschlacht*, Act 1, 3.

toward the greater political power of any one. And Herman himself (Prussia) sets the example for the other princes (Bavaria, Württemberg, Saxony, etc.), by frankly avowing the necessity of making Marbod (Austria), head and leader of the union. Through his voluntary guarantees of good faith he wins over a jealous political adversary to the national cause.

But even more significant was the recognition of the populace as the only true basis of nationality. Herman's words:—

Kann ich den Römerhass, eh' ich den Platz verlasse,
In der Cherusker Herzen nicht,
Dass er durch ganz Germanien schlägt, entflammen,
So scheitert meine ganze Unternehmung.¹

ring with the spirit that made possible the "holy" war of 1813.

It was an important step when Kleist recognized the people, perhaps not as a paramount, but surely as a coördinate, factor in the state. This new appreciation of the momentous rôle which popular life and ideals must play in state and nation, this recognition of the validity of mass-ideals, gave to the dramatic action of *Herman* its massive proportions. The centre of interest is a national, not an individual, will realizing itself. In *Katie of Heilbron*, Kleist had portrayed individual character, the glory of the individual naïvely feeling and acting in accord with the ideal sentiment of national life. In *Herman*, Kleist considered the individual and individual character of subordinate interest. National will and national character now claimed his attention.

It is always a thankless task to dwell upon the weak points of any poetic production, particularly when a genuine poetic advance over previous works combines with a theme in itself so sympathetic as that of *Herman*. Still it must be admitted that as a drama *Herman* is unsatisfactory. For however

¹ Unless, before departing, I inflame
The hearts of my Cheruski people
With hate of Rome so fierce, that it shall burst
Forth throughout Germany — my project fails !
— *Hermannsschlacht*, Act IV, 3.

magnificent the scenes that Kleist sets before the imaginative vision, however forceful their realism, however logical their sequence, they are, both singly and collectively, without that subtle vitality which alone could make them appear as realities in the process of developing, and not as realities that have been developed. It is as if Kleist threw upon the screen a series of magnificent moving pictures, full of the gorgeous colorings and multifarious forms of life, but after all only pictures each of which carries the label, "I am made," and not "I make myself." One has the feeling of having seen a splendid dramatic panorama, but not a drama.

In a manner thoroughly characteristic of the man, Kleist had worked himself into such frenzied hate of Napoleon and all things French, that poetic contemplation of contemporary conditions became wholly out of the question. All he saw and felt was this: the nation's right to political independence and the possibility of regaining this independence through the coöperation of all. But this idea of coöperation was not conceived as the present potential content of national consciousness. It represented what ought to be done, not what the times would inevitably bring to fruition. It was therefore a rational concept, though it was derived from an intuitive appreciation of German character. As Kleist saw conditions they militated against a unity of effort. The undercurrent of national life was setting in this direction, but Kleist's peculiar temper prevented him from perceiving this with the necessary clearness. And this was precisely the reason for his choice of theme in his treatment of the present. In the story of Herman the undercurrent had all come to the surface, and what Kleist hoped and desired for his own day had been gloriously consummated. Magnificent as the poem is, the lyric and epic qualities do not blend. Nothing betrays the maker more clearly than the well-nigh dehumanized logic of Herman and the manner in which everything and everybody is sacrificed without hesitation, nay without the least evidence of human feeling, to the one great purpose of his life. He is the embodiment of an idea, not a human being; a superbly fashioned mechanical contrivance that

walks and talks and acts, an automaton of the poet Kleist. Surely if Kleist's dramatic imagination had been fructified in the first instance by the story of Herman and his fight for German liberty, not only had the character of Herman appeared more sympathetic and human, but the purpose of the nation to be free would have been presented evolving from the conflict of elemental forces in the life of the ancient Germans. What we do see, is a national will to be free, full-panoplied, and irresistibly crushing external opposition.

Notwithstanding this criticism, the poem represented a distinct advance. It remained for Kleist to broaden his ideal of patriotism and to realize that it was immanent as a reforming force in the life of his people. This he succeeded in doing, and inspired by such a realization, he wrote his greatest drama, *The Prince of Homburg*.

The impassioned song, *Germania to Her Children*, with which Kleist welcomed the Austrian uprising against Napoleon (1809), still breathed the impulsive patriotism and the fierce vindictiveness of *Herman*, then just completed by the poet. But the battle of Wagram ruthlessly shattered these hopes. This experience served to calm the feverish impetuosity of the poet, and at the same time centred his hopes on Prussia. When Kleist conceived and wrote *The Prince of Homburg*, he had risen superior to the biting rancor of the previous year and awaited with confident assurance the inevitable conflict : —

Zum Sieg! Zum Sieg!
In Staub mit allen Feinden Brandenburgs!

The Prince of Homburg was completed in Berlin, February, 1810. It was to be the last dramatic effort of Kleist. He had closed *Herman* with a prophecy of German national unity under the leadership of Prussia. He wrote *The Prince of Homburg* in the sincere conviction, despite all adverse appearances, that the spirit of the Prussian state would permeate the nation and weld it together into an organic union. The ideal that now inspired his dramatic muse transcended personal hopes and personal desires. It meant more than a reaction against lethargic conditions. It was not derived from a past

dissociated from the present. Nor was its scope determined by the immediate present. For the second time in his life Kleist saw past and present as an organic unit, and now his vision included the future as well. Past, present, and future appeared to him as a unit energized by a great principle of state. That Adam Müller's theory of state, Kleist's own pride of country, family traditions, and numerous other personal factors influenced the dramatist is certainly true. But this influence aided him to apprehend the genius of the Prussian state as a force to be dealt with in the organization of the national life of Germany.

Only in two instances was the economy of the play directly, and therefore also adversely, affected by the intrusion of purely personal elements. The somnambulistic motive introduced into Act I, and the fearful terror of death which unmans the prince in Act III, are blemishes on the drama. These incidents aside, the personality of Kleist was brought into proper artistic relation to his dramatic theme.

For the second time Kleist succeeded in creating a drama out of facts seen in a true perspective, and for the second time wrote a play out of the fulness of artistic inspiration. In a measure it is true that "no other figure of Kleist's imagination bears a more striking resemblance to Kleist himself than this wayward dreamer [*i.e. the prince*], who under the stress of necessity becomes a man; and no other figure is a finer type of the return of romanticism from capricious self-indulgence and æsthetic revelry to the simple and all-important duties of common life." But this criticism of a recent writer does not touch the heart of the drama, nor does it do justice to the victory achieved by Kleist.

Artistically speaking, *The Prince of Homburg* came very near realizing the ideal of historical drama to which so many German poets of the nineteenth century openly or secretly aspired. Kleist could easily have justified the free treatment of single historic facts, the emphasis upon the ideal content of historic phenomena, and the ready acceptance of legendary material as the embodiment of the spiritual essence of bald

actualities, by pointing to Schiller's *Wallenstein*, *Mary Stuart*, or *William Tell*. But Kleist differed from Schiller in his dramatization of history in one most important point, and this difference became characteristic of the dramatic striving of the nineteenth century. For Schiller, historical incidents were historic in the sense of being concluded. They interested him not because of any immediate relation to present life, nor because of the presence of special elements more or less conditioning contemporary developments. His interest attached rather to that which was characteristic in a given past as a phenomenon ripened into a definite and concluded experience of mankind. For Kleist, history had come to wear a different aspect. In the period of his vain wrestling with the story of Robert the Guiskard, he had more nearly approximated to the large and at the same time individualized cosmopolitanism of Schiller. His poetic intentions were then, in respect to their philosophic tendencies, very much the same as Schiller's in *Wallenstein*. Happily the final realization of the futility of his efforts in this direction came to Kleist at a time when political conditions of German life supplied a new stimulus. More and more his vision concentrated upon the national type, and more and more the historic evidence of national homogeneity, national individuality, and national destiny appealed to his imagination.

Spanish, French, English, Russian, and even a fictitious conglomerate civilization could serve the needs of Schiller's dramatic muse. Kleist in this last period of poetic activity could not thus be inspired. His last three dramas were concerned with German life. He had ever sought for the threads running back and forth between the life of his environment and the past. The skein of general human fate had, however, proved an endless tangle. With more keenly pointed vision he came to trace here and there the red thread of the genius of his own people, until at last he saw it winding in and out through history and legend, reeling off from the ever whirling bobbin of his nation's life, — the sure guide for the present and the bright promise of the future.

In the history of the Prussian state, Kleist perceived an

energizing principle of national life : coördination of individual efforts for the commonweal. He realized how sentimental patriotism could be reënforced and steadied by rational, intelligent recognition and observance of the duties of citizenship in every walk of life. Happening upon the apocryphal story of the disagreement between the Great Elector and his cavalry leader, Prince Frederick of Homburg, he had revealed to him in concrete form the full meaning of this rational spirit of patriotism and its significance for the nation at large. The truth or falsity of the story concerned him little, even less the incidents of the story itself. With a free hand he altered its details. The spirit thereof laid hold of his imagination. Keenly conscious of the selfish and petty interests that retarded the victorious progress of this spirit in Germany and even Prussia, the poet Kleist saw in this incident a symbol of the dramatic struggle in which the genius of the nation was engaged. Thus recast by the dramatist, the story became typical, symbolical of a vital energy in the German race.

Kleist's drama is wholly free from all revolutionary elements, a strange contrast to *Michael Kohlhaas*. Yet the spirit of this earlier tale was not essentially at variance with the spirit of his last drama. The drama set free the constructive elements of the tale. It accepts the monarchical principle at its ideal valuation and recognizes in a manner wholly sane and natural the value of this ideal for German national life. There is no cringing and fawning to the personal wishes of the Elector, no mawkish submission to his judgment, no adulation of the man as a being, by reason of his birth or position, of finer mould than others. Indeed, generals and captains, household and intimate friends, boldly range themselves against the Elector's supposed wilfulness and personal irritation. Not until they perceive that his action is wholly guided by considerations of state and that these rise superior to his private desires, is their submission to his will effected. Here lies the test of Kleist's conception of royalty. Bowing to the man in royal robes as lord and master of the destinies of his subjects is not true loyalty. True loyalty consists in honoring and manfully

supporting the ideal of state represented in his person. Kleist had nothing to say explicitly of the coördinate relation of the great mass of the people to the government. His theme excluded direct reference to this problem. Possibly his aristocratic leanings, which had grown more pronounced through intercourse with Berlin patriots, made it easier for the dramatist to avoid the injection of inorganic motives. Be that as it may, the drama in reality expressed the idea of such a coördination more effectually and certainly far more poetically than *Hermannsschlacht*.

Through daily intercourse with German patriots in Berlin, the ideal of civic patriotism, which was to free the country within a few years and be most dastardly betrayed after accomplishing its mission, so completely possessed Kleist, that he could see with the eyes of the nation and feel with the generous and strong impulse of the nation. In *Herman* he had exhorted the people as well as their princes. In *The Prince of Homburg* he was no longer the exhorter of either, but the prophet and expounder of a national life awakening to the consciousness of its best power and realizing the ideal content of its being.

Neither *Herman* nor *The Prince of Homburg* was destined at that time to be placed before the German people. During the lifetime of the poet they were neither staged nor published. The failure to secure a hearing finally dashed Kleist's hopes. Nay more: the last wholesome tie that bound him to life and the activities of life seems to have snapped asunder when his last drama was rejected by the court-theatre. To be excluded from participating, in the only way in which he felt himself competent, in the course of events, to have the impossibility of speaking to his people in the hour of their need brought home to him like inexorable fate, this was more than his sensitive nature could endure. His final struggle in Berlin against the inevitable, the disfavor of the king, chicaneries of censorship, the breaking up of his circle of friends, and the impending participation of Prussia in the Russian campaign of Napoleon, hastened the rash step which ended his life. The pathos, if it be not tragedy, of these last

months was concentrated in the last poem written by Kleist. In *The Last Song* he resigned not merely for himself, but for his country : —

Fernab, am Horizont, auf Felsenrissen,
Liegt der gewitterschwere Krieg getürmt.
Die Blitze zucken schon, die ungewissen,
Der Wanderer sucht das Laubdach, das ihn schirmt:
Und wie ein Strom, geschwellt von Regengüssen,
Aus seines Ufers Bette heulend stürmt,
Kommt das Verderben mit entbundnen Wogen
Auf Alles, was besteht, herangezogen.

* * * * *

Und stärker rauscht der Sänger in die Saiten,
Der Töne ganze Macht lockt er hervor,
Er singt das Lied, für's Vaterland zu streiten,
Und machtlos schlägt sein Ruf an jedes Ohr,
Und wie er flatternd das Panier der Zeiten
Sich näher pflanzen sieht, von Thor zu Thor,
Schliesst er sein Lied ; er wünscht mit ihm zu enden,
Und legt die Leier thränend aus den Händen.¹

A few months later the restless heart was stilled forever. The first great dramatist of modern Germany and the first poet to blaze a new path for his art had ceased to be. But the

¹ Along the far horizon's craggy heights
Lie piled the thunderladen clouds of war.
The lightnings flash their vague, uncertain glare,
Wayfarers seek the sheltering roof of leaves.
And like a stream, to howling torrent swelled,
Bursts o'er its banks with wild tumultuous roar,
Destruction's flood, unloosed and unrestrained,
Comes surging down on ev'ry thing that is.

* * * * *

With fiercer hand the bard sweeps o'er the chords,
Lures forth the mighty swell of melody.
The battle-cry of patriots he sings,
But not an ear to listen to his song.
And as he sees the banner of the times
Come marching on, unfurled from gate to gate,
He ends his song and fain with it would end.
With streaming eyes he lays his lyre down.

(First and last stanzas.)

legacy he left became years later as much the centre of interest as it was neglected at his demise. One is tempted to close a study of Kleist's poetic activity with the lines of Emanuel Geibel:—

O Fluch, dem diese Zeit verfallen,
Dass sie kein grosser Puls durchbebt,
Kein Sehnen das geteilt von Allen,
Im Künstler nach Gestaltung strebt,
Das ihm nicht Rast gönnt, bis er's endlich
Bewältigt in den Marmor flösst
Und so in Schönheit allverständlich,
Das Rätsel seiner Tage löst.¹

Only that the same lines would be a more or less fitting epitome to many another poetic striving of the century.

¹ O curse whose blight is on our day :
That no great pulse-beat throbs in thee,
No longing common in its sway,
Burns in the artist to be free,
Or grants him peace until he moulds
In marble form its image fair,
The riddle of his age unfolds
Through beauty wherein all may share !

CHAPTER III

NATIONAL AWAKENING IN THE WARS OF LIBERATION

LYRIC POETRY EXALTS THREE FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES OF PATRIOTISM

KÖRNER, SCHENKENDORF, ARNDT

IN the shameful stress of Napoleonic oppression the German people became conscious of themselves, of their racial unity, their national homogeneity, and consequently of the sacred right to national independence.

The fires of national freedom burned in every heart with a warmer glow. Ernst Moritz Arndt had felt that literature and people were estranged. German poets, so he expressed this feeling, shot over the heads of the populace, and the patriotic striving of the best men of Germany failed to meet with an encouraging response among the masses. The great national fault of his country he conceived to be the inability of its populace to concentrate all its energies upon one supreme purpose. In the first of his magnificent pamphlets, *The Spirit of the Age*, he had preached the gospel of national unity and failed to arouse enthusiasm. In 1813, however, a new spirit animated the people, and now, returning to Germany after two years of exile, the same Arndt found the best exponents of true patriotism among the common folk and exclaimed in a burst of enthusiasm, "What men have I not met among these peasants, men who fill me with confident assurance that such a people cannot perish."

For German literature, in particular for those poems that phrase the national patriotic ideal, this change in popular sentiment was of inestimable value. For at no other time was nationalism so spontaneously creative as in those years of

national uprising. German poetry now responded to a great, wistful longing of the people; it phrased the silent thought and freed the stammering tongue. The best ideals of Schiller, Werner, and Kleist were coming to fruition.

But there was a difference between the poetry of these three men, so far as it expressed the national ideal, and the poetry of the Wars of Liberation. Schiller, Werner, and Kleist had rationally conceived certain great principles that *ought* to determine national life. These principles were, therefore, at issue with the actualities of life, and their poetic phrasing was necessarily dramatic. Kleist alone, in his last drama, came to see the national theme in its proper poetic perspective. He took the great step from what *ought* to be to what *would* be. The change in popular sentiment removed both the ought and the would with which all three poets dealt. Their ideals had become vital forces in the lives of their countrymen.

The poet whose muse was now inspired by the same ideals could not feel a dramatic contrast between his ideal and the paramount forces in German life. The liberty-instinct permeated the masses, and the great principle proclaimed by Schiller in *Wilhelm Tell* was practically victorious. Affliction had intensified spiritual experience, and popular sentiment now wrapped national aspirations in that mystic glory in which Werner had vainly sought to clothe them. Kleist's passionate pleading for racial unity was no longer necessary; for the thoughts that burst the fetters of conventional art in *Herman* were now quivering into life in every German breast. Poetry, then, so far as it dealt with the national ideal under discussion, had not to face a dramatic possibility, but an unexpressed or imperfectly expressed reality. The sentiment that cried out in the poet for artistic form was everywhere pulsating in the atmosphere he breathed. And so it happened that this abounding national sentiment became featured in lyric verse, and that so much of it became the common treasure of the whole nation.

It was this awakening of national sentiment that gave to the poetry of the Wars of Liberation a distinct artistic quality rarely found in the liberty-poems antedating the great struggle

of 1813–1815, or written in the years following its conclusion. Most frequently philosophic analysis of the patriotic motive had served in place of the form-giving vision, and didactic exhortation in place of artistically realized truth. Hölderlin's beautifully sad poems *Song of a German*, and *To the Germans*, Kleist's few lyrics, notably his plaint at the death of Queen Louise of Prussia, and particularly Friedrich Rückert's *Sonnets in Harness* (Geharnischte Sonnette) betray most clearly the reflective mood of the composers. Similarly the plasmic imagination of Eichendorff, perhaps one of the sweetest lyric poets of the century, was incapable of moulding the national theme into perfect lyric form, until the prophecy of his lines came true: —

Denn wie die Erze vom Hammer,
So wird das lock're Geschlecht
Gehau'n sein von Not und Jammer
Zu festem Eisen recht.¹

But the time came when the poet could pen the stanza: —

Was für ein Klang in diesen Tagen
Hat übermächtig angeschlagen?
Der Völker Herzen sind die Saiten,
Durch die jetzt Gottes Hauche gleiten.²

And then the haze of moody reflection that had dimmed Eichendorff's vision was dispelled by the fresh gust of popular enthusiasm sweeping over the country. Then his genius, for the first time, clothed the national theme in visions as exquisite as those of his nature poems. Indeed, his conception of nationality seems to have fused completely with that of nature, producing poems of such superb imagery as *Farewell of the Rangers* (der Jäger Abschied) and *Departure* (Aufbruch), with their marvellous blending of patriotism and forest fancy.

¹ Like hammers moulding ore
Must woe and sorrow weld
This loose-knit generation
To iron tough and sure. — *Klage*, 1809.

² Oh, say, what new and glorious note
Swells ever louder in our ears?
The hearts of nations are the strings
O'er which the breath of God is passing. — *Zeichen*, 1812.

This liberating of Eichendorff's muse, most strikingly noticeable when *Farewell of the Rangers* is compared with the earlier poem *Lament* (Klage), is indicative of the change that came over the phrasing of the patriotic ideal by men like Schenkendorf, Arndt, and Körner, the three foremost poets of the war. Not that their war songs or war poems surpassed in every instance the work of their earlier years, nor that their poems of this period were in every respect more beautiful than the liberty poems of other writers in the previous decade. As a matter of fact, few of their poems equalled Rückert's *Sonnets in Harness* in diction or rhythm. Schenkendorf's academic conception of certain phases of nationality often played havoc with his poetic visions. Still, the poetic fame of these three champions of liberty rests, and must rest mainly, upon their inspired patriotism. The sight of the new life stirring in the nation put life into their poetry.

It is, perhaps, true that Körner became the idol of the German people more because his poet-life was crowned by a soldier's death, of which he so loved to sing, than because of any marked excellence of his poetic productions. Prolific as his writings were in the few years preceding the uprising of Germany, they gave no indication of original poetic power. His dramas, though effective as plays, were hardly more than second-rate literary productions. The single-mindedness of the ingenious youth, and his artless, joyous acceptance of life at its surface value, made impossible any dramatic conceptions; for these owe their very existence to a profound insight into the reality, and an abiding conviction of the fundamental conflict of its forces. Captivated by the technique of Schiller, Körner naturally contented himself with imitating the style of his great precursor, and hardly did more than adapt certain effective stories to the stage. That he was a close and successful student of the formal elements of Schiller's dramas, goes without saying; and at times some of the fiery passion that characterizes his later poems gives a semblance of genuine dramatic life to these plays as, for example, to his *Zriny*. But Körner was not a poet-dramatist. He was merely a successful playwright. Had he

died upon the field of battle without first phrasing so genuinely the passion of patriotism, history could not mention him as one of the typical poets of the nineteenth century.

The war lyrics that made Körner's fame owe their effectiveness to the very trait of character which deprived his dramatic attempts of poetic depth. No German grasped the national movement with such naïve single-mindedness as he.

Körner was not unaware of the complex nature of the problem that confronted his countrymen, nor was he wholly blind to the logical consequences of the popular cry for freedom. But he deliberately chose to disregard all but the immediate issue. In a letter to his friend, Fr. Förster, he wrote as follows of the newly instituted order of the Iron Cross: "The old distinction is no longer made, according to which the brave grenadier received a lead coin and the cowardly courtier a golden star. In awarding the Iron Cross the question is not asked, How many ancestors have you? but, Have you fought bravely? That is a principle out of which may develop a reorganization of the whole social order. But for the present let us give our entire attention to the enemy: everything else will come about in due time."

Körner possessed in a remarkable degree this faculty of living wholly in the present and of giving himself unreservedly to the enthusiasm of the moment. Immermann called Lützow's corps of volunteers "the poetry of the army"; Körner in turn may well be called the poetic incarnation of the spirit of liberty inspiring his countrymen. To him the stirring struggle for freedom was poetry. All else was, for the moment at least, prose. None but a Körner could have dashed off that thrilling metaphor: —

Soll ich in der Prosa sterben? —
Poesie, du Flammenquell,
Brich hervor mit leuchtendem Verderben,
Aber schnell! ¹

¹ Shall in prose I perish? —
Poetry, thou fount of fire,
O break forth with glorious destruction,
But make haste.— *Mismut*, last lines.

For he did more than describe, did more than impart a meaning to the life he exalted. He metamorphosed it into poetry. For him war became a joyous quest for the bride; death in battle, a blissful slumbering in the arms of the beloved. Or he saw in that even more perfect vision of *The Song of the Sword* (Schwertlied), soldier and sweetheart chatting blithely as they look for the coming of their wedding morn. But the wedding feast prepared for them is battle; the soldier's sweetheart is his trusty sword.

The sentiment of most of Körner's poems written under the title *Lyre and Sword* was elemental. Refusing to analyze the complex nature of the liberty ideal, Körner preferred to glorify the emotional effect rather than the emotional cause. His poetic consciousness seems to have treated "feeling" as a primary factor, existing in and of itself, and sufficient unto itself. In this Körner's poetic physiognomy was typical of the vague impulsiveness that characterized the master passion of those days. Liberty! How few quite realized the significance of that cry, or fathomed the depth to which it stirred their being. Yes, it meant freedom from the political control of a foreign potentate; it also meant deliverance of the sacred soil of Germany from French soldiery. It meant a united Germany and a Germany resplendent in its pristine power and glory. It meant love of race and pride of nationality in new and vigorous ascendancy. But somehow, to most it suggested something more than this, something inscrutable, that seemed to rouse at the call to arms.

The previous century had had its patriotic poetry. Klopstock had sung of the love of mother-tongue and the pride of nationality; Claudius, of sturdy German cheer and brotherhood; Stolberg, of the rich inheritance of the past; Gleim, of Frederick's sacred fight for Prussian independence. But this poetry contained no appeal to the primary emotions, and its liberty theme was not fraught with intense personal significance. It glowed with the splendor of reflected light. These poets loved their country as something to which they belonged; Körner and his fellow-patriots loved it as something that belonged to them, and

in the preservation of which they had a vital concern. The child had slipped its tutelary bonds, and in the vigor of his manhood the youth felt the inspiration of personal responsibility and personal privilege. Subjects had, in spirit, changed into citizens.

The cry for liberty was now a sign of quickened civic consciousness. Körner realized the power of initiative that this new feeling released. He had not studied his Schiller in vain, and did not hesitate to appeal to this new consciousness when he summoned his Saxon countrymen to arms: "We are all free men. . . . Not levies we!" This sense of the personal significance of patriotism made Körner's war lyrics so virile:—

*Unsre Sprache ward geschändet;
Unsre Tempel stürzten ein;
Unsre Ehre ist verpfändet:
Deutsche Brüder löst sie ein!*¹

The personal equation in patriotism, the thirst for vengeance, found its best poetic phrasing in Körner's lyrics:—

*Die wilde Jagd und die deutsche Jagd
Auf Henkerblut und Tyrannen!*²

But this vengeance was in no sense a purely personal feeling, such as Kleist condensed in *Herman*. It was purged of selfishness.

One of the great merits of Körner's lyrics is the absence of all reflection on the nature of their essentially complex theme. The nearest that Körner ever came to doing so, was in the lines:—

*Es ist kein Krieg, von dem die Kronen wissen;
Es ist ein Kreuzzug, 's ist ein heil'ger Krieg!*³

¹ Ours the language they defamed;
Ours the temples they destroyed;
Ours the honor they impawned:
German Brothers, up! redeem!

— *Bundeslied vor der Schlacht*, 2d stanza.

² The wild hunt, the Teutonic hunt
For hangman's blood and for tyrants!

— *Lützows wilde Jagd*, last stanza.

³ This is no war by royalty concocted;

A crusade, yea, a holy war is this! — *Aufruf*, 2d stanza.

He felt the deeper significance of his countrymen's longing, and unhesitatingly phrased it as an established fact: —

Mich trägt ein wack'rer Reiter,
 Drum blink ich auch so heiter,
 Bin freien Mannes Wehr;
 Das freut dem Schwerte sehr.
 Ja, gutes Schwert, frei bin ich
 Und liebe dich herzinnig,
 Als wärest du mir getraut
 Als eine liebe Braut.¹

At the same time there was no thought of disloyalty to the patriarchal principle of monarchy. Körner never dreamed that the change in popular sentiment might involve a change in the relationship between ruler and ruled. His countrymen had partly taken the initiative out of the hands of kings and princes, but it was reserved for a later generation to justify the prophetic words of Attinghausen in Schiller's *Tell*: —

Hat sich der Landmann solcher That verwogen,
 Aus eig'nem Mittel, ohne Hilf' der Edeln:
 Hat er der eig'nen Kraft so viel vertraut,
 Ja, dann bedarf es unserer nicht mehr,
 Getröstet können wir zu Grabe steigen.
 Es lebt nach uns, durch andre Kräfte will
 Das Herrliche der Menschheit sich erhalten.²

¹ A rider bold unsheathes me,
 In gleaming smiles I wreath me,
 The freeman's watch and ward.
 Joy cometh to the sword.

Free, trusty sword, I prove me,
 With all my heart I love thee,
 A bridegroom, at my side
 I bear my sweet, my bride.

— *Song of the Sword*, 2d and 3d stanzas.

² Dared peasants such a venture undertake
 In self-reliance, spurning noble aid;
 Placed they such confidence in their resources,
 Then needless our existence hath become
 And reconciled we sink into the grave.
 The glory of humanity survives,
 Preserves itself through other energies.

— *Wilhelm Tell*, Act IV, 2.

In this naïve treatment of the liberty theme Körner was the antipode of Max von Schenkendorf. As a poet Körner had schooled himself in Schiller's rhetorical pathos. He had grown to manhood in the atmosphere of Schiller's idealism, never so much as questioning the supreme reality of this inherited valuation of life. So completely had the struggle of the nation for liberty become for him a poetic fact, so absolute was his faith in the reality of his ideal, that even when wounded, as he thought, unto death, he was forced in his last moments of consciousness into that rhythmic declaration of the sum and substance of his life which ends with the lines: —

Und was ich hier als Heiligtum erkannte,
Wofür ich rasch und jugendlich entbrannte,
Ob ich's nun Freiheit, ob ich's Liebe nannte :

Als lichten Seraph seh' ich's vor mir stehen : —
Und wie die Sinne langsam mir vergehen,
Trägt mich ein Hauch zu morgenroten Höhen.¹

Schenkendorf sang in the strains of a different school and saw life in the light of another radiance. Converted from a thoughtless, if not reckless youth, to pietism; swayed by the extravagant religiosity of a Frau von Krüdener; captivated by the gentle mysticism of Jung Stilling; and fascinated by Novalis's poetic phrasing of the sublime unity of the known and the unknowable, — Schenkendorf could not take toward the new force that was making itself felt in the national life that simple human attitude which made his contemporary's lyrics spontaneously poetic. The compelling force in his poetic nature was not the liberty passion of Schiller-Körner, but a peculiar longing for a religious-poetic transfiguration of life. Consequently the patriotic aspirations of his German countrymen were all too

¹ And what I here acknowledge as a shrine,
For which my bosom burned with youthful fire,
Whether I called it liberty or love,

Now, seraph-like, displays its form divine —
I feel my failing senses slow expire ;
One breath will waft me to the realms above.

— Translation by JOHN STRANG.

often veiled in mystic reflections. His spirituality, indeed, always imparted to his verse a melodious sweetness, but it forced him likewise to penetrate beneath the worldly in search of its spiritual significance. In so doing, he analyzed the concrete and deprived it of that self-sufficient and elemental poetic existence which it attained in Körner's lyrics.

Only once—and this once, it must be admitted, in a poem which surpassed anything from the pen of Körner—Schenkendorf gave himself unreservedly to the poetry of the moment. In *The Song of the Rhine* he pictured a monarch of old deprived of his ancient imperial glory and made to serve the whim of the invader's pleasure. Fretting under the supine indifference of his once loyal and chivalrous people, he mutters ominous words to his captors, as he turns wrathfully in his narrow bed. Deep in his heart he cherishes the remembrance of his nation's slumbering manhood against the coming day, when it sets him free. That is the poet's vision of the Rhine. Other poets had sung of the German Rhine, others were to sound its praises, but none in a form so pregnant with vital beauty and vitalized national sentiment.

The flush of victory and the joy of possessing again the beautiful river fused for this once into true poetry the reflective elements of Schenkendorf's patriotism. In his other poems of political freedom, exquisite though they be in the melodious beauty of their diction, romantic introspection led to moralizing. Schenkendorf was constantly reconstructing a subjective past as an antithesis to the present, and endeavoring to draw from this past inspiration for his song. He was seldom content unless he could justify the striving of his day and treat it as the expression of an idea. German mediævalism, chivalry, and minnesong, the restoration of the old empire and of the imperial electorate, found in him a warm champion. Like Körner he foresaw the possible dawn of a new civic order, but only as a mental possibility, not as a poetic potentiality. He saw with the eyes of the great statesman, Baron von Stein, not with the eyes of the poet, Körner.

Notwithstanding this artistic inadequacy of Schenkendorf's

poetry one cannot help feeling that his verse responded to a more profound sentiment in German life than Körner's martial strains. If we look for concrete images in his poems, we shall find ourselves disappointed. Who can quite analyze the feeling that stirs within him when the evening breeze whispers through the æolian harp! Utter contentment, and yet a strange longing; supreme peace, and yet a quickening of the heart as in the presence of some great expectation. And of the same nature was the quality of Schenkendorf's best national poetry. It compares in this respect with such typical songs of our own country, North and South, as *Tenting* and *Dixie*. What German can read Schenkendorf's poem *Mother-tongue* beginning with the lines:—

Muttersprache, Mutterlaut!
Wie so wonnesam, so traut!¹

without at least feeling the presence of the same indefinable charm which steals into the Southern heart with the strains of *Dixie*? Or who can fail to perceive that in the poem *On the Death of the Queen*:—

Rose, schöne Königsrose,
Hat auch dich der Sturm getroffen?²

Schenkendorf voiced for his nation that mysterious hush of expectation which in *Tenting* appealed so strongly to the soldiers of the North?

It is not surprising that Schenkendorf's lyrics nestled in their gentle way so close to German hearts; for in these lyrics the Germans became conscious of a bond of unity more subtle and yet more compelling than that of a common origin or institutions, inherited soil, and common mental characteristics. It was the bond of a common spirituality. Schenkendorf's romantic intuition ventured to penetrate to the inmost recesses of national life, and it was there that he found his inspiration:—

¹ Mother-language, Mother-tongue!
O, how winsome, thou, and sweet!

² Rose, my beauteous royal rose,
Thou too stricken by the storm?

Ein Geist von Oben dringet
 Durch alle Völker hin,
 Doch jeden Stamm bezwinget
 Sein eigner tiefer Sinn.¹

In a similar attempt Werner had signally failed. Schenkendorf was more successful, since he realized the spiritual essence of life not as the fitful refuge of a morbid mind, but as the only source of joyous striving. When Werner attempted to reduce to a dramatic formula his idea of the latent religious force controlling the development of German civilization, he became involved in fantastic abstractions. Schenkendorf's conviction that in each race or nation there comes to expression some phase of the divine which determines its final solidarity and character, and that according to the measure of this divine stature, a people's destiny is determined, imparted, in the absence of concrete poetic visions, at least poetic force to his verse.

That the German people were susceptible of feeling more profoundly than other races, in joy as in sorrow; that they were imbued with an innate sense of unflinching loyalty; that they were at heart stanch and true, conscious of their strength as of their weakness, setting ethical freedom above exemption from law and worldly restraints, — these were convictions which Schenkendorf's personal experience and sympathetic observation of German life during its oppression and reassertion had ripened into a poetic axiom. For him this life bore the halo of divine consecration : —

Das ist die Gottesweihe,
 Die Deutschlands Würde schafft.

At times Schenkendorf was indeed led into conceptions as mystically vague as those of Werner's religious sensualism.

¹ The Spirit from Above controls
 All nations far and wide,
 But the instinct of its soul of souls
 Rules ev'ry race beside. — *Antwort*, 2d stanza.

² Divine the consecration
 That makes for German worth. — *Antwort*, 3d stanza.

His sanctified earthly fatherland suggested and became the symbol of the heavenly, and in curiously rhapsodic confusion the poet sang of both in the same breath, or he identified occasionally spirituality and religiosity, or religious institutions and religious life. But even in these poems he was always genuine, and though one may deprecate his mistaken or distorted mental vision, one never has occasion to feel that its product was stilted or artificial.

Ernst Moritz Arndt's poems are not characterized by the mystic spirituality that pervades Schenkendorf's, or by the naïve impulsiveness of Körner's lyric verse. It was not in his rugged nature to withdraw his penetrating gaze from that which in the present was significant of a better future, and to content himself, as did Körner, with the immediate or surface issue. *Everything else will come about in due time* — Arndt could never consent to any assertion of that kind. No more could he interpret in Schenkendorf's way the new order of the Iron Cross as the symbol of the church militant. More profound in his earnest, ripened manhood than Körner, more poised and less sentimental in his spiritual temper than Schenkendorf, Arndt was happily gifted to emphasize in his verse a phase of national consciousness which, if it did not escape, yet rarely inspired his two contemporaries.

Arndt was born among the sandy isles of the Baltic, on Swedish, not German, territory, of a sturdy yeoman family that had risen from serfdom into the estate of the free. Early he was taught to take life seriously and confronted with the great problem of class barriers. In the cosmopolitan atmosphere of the waning eighteenth century he became an inveterate traveller. He was a keen observer of the mental and moral characteristics of foreign nationalities, as well as of their customs and institutions, and his observations were the more valuable since they were based on comparative study. These conditions determined his patriotic activity. Arndt never became untrue to the best instincts of his lowly origin, and remained throughout his life the noblest type of a self-made man. Körner fell on the field of battle, leading, in his own impulsive way, a charge

of cavalry after the recall had been sounded. Arndt lived to round out a full four-score years and ten, a constant, unflinching champion of that principle of nationality which he had recognized as the new bond of German unity.

In all Arndt's writings the influence of his affiliation with men like Johannes Müller and Fichte is clearly discernible. The romantic desire to get at the "spirit" actuating the phenomena, to generalize by grouping a few significant facts and deducing therefrom the presence of a latent moral or ethical force controlling a whole period or age, could not but have its fascination for Arndt. In his pamphlet *Germania and Europe*, he undertook to compare the state of humanity as he had personally observed it with human conditions of the past ages as he had read of them. Like the romanticists, he railed against excessive refinement and demanded a reform in the education of mankind. But his own rearing had been such as to prevent him from falling a prey to mere generalization. He was thoroughly out of sympathy with all fantastic reconstructions of life. The world of ideas or the world of feeling as realities dissociated from the world of human activity and human limitations had no existence for him. The romantic and the matter of fact held each other in even balance. Without the former he might have become more of a casuist than a synthetic reasoner; without the latter, a mystic dreamer rather than an enthusiastic reformer.

One has but to glance through the various parts of his great Philippic, *The Spirit of the Age*, to catch at once the process of the man's growth and the inspiration of the poet's song of liberty. Part I opens with a repetition of the theme of *Germania and Europe*, without attempting pragmatic criticism. But soon the writer concentrates his vision on Germany and specific evils that threaten its welfare: its unprincely princes, its ignoble nobility, and above all its "parvenus." "When shall the wheels of destruction be stayed?" he asks in closing, and at once comes the answer, "When each individual feels his own sovereignty, when the populace becomes worthy, the law holy and sacred, the fatherland immortal,

the princes noble—then you need no more fear: the world is saved.”

The reply shows the peculiar union of romantic vagueness and hard common-sense which characterizes the first papers grouped and published in 1805 under the title *Spirit of the Age*. Those published in 1808 still reveal a strong romantic bias. Again Arndt inveighed against the intellectuality and rationalism of the times, and again he closed with a vision that reminds us strangely of the impressionistic conceptions of a Novalis, a Fichte, a Werner. He sees the dawn of a third epoch of Christianity. The sovereign rule of rationalism is broken, the work and ideas of Luther are once more taken up, and in the Elysian splendor of a spiritualized Christianity the world is brought back to the simplicity and innocence of Nature.

But in this romantic vision Arndt uncovered unsparingly the concrete evidences of national degeneration. He did even more. He suggested practical reforms, concise remedies. Not the old imperial confederation,—to which the romanticists harked back and the mystically inclined Schenkendorf,—but a new Germany under the imperial sovereignty of Austria and Prussia, to which powers all other states were to bow as they bowed to Napoleon.

In 1813 new and more exact suggestions of national reconstruction were formulated in a third part, supplemented in the following year by a demand for a reorganization of internal affairs. With special force he insisted upon the rehabilitation of the classes as the basis of constitutional organization. But each class was to be coördinate to every other class; no one class privileged in the eyes of the law. Aristocracy of birth, as well as aristocracy of intellect, he rejected, and in their place he substituted aristocracy of calling or vocation. And finally when the reactionary movement set in after the wars, and threatened to make all the popular enthusiasm of late years seem futile, Arndt was the first to champion the great cause of the common people in the last of the series of his *Spirit of the Age*.

Whatever objections may be raised against the specific reforms brought forward in all these pamphlets, it cannot be said of Arndt that he was a dreamer or did not concentrate his mind

on the practical affairs of German life. In each successive tract he stated his ideas and propositions with greater clearness and exactness. However, all he had to say blazed and scintillated with an internal glow. The passion of the man flashed forth in fiery language. Arndt preached to his people, but he preached to them as a brother, as one who realized their faults and their strength, because he was one with them and could see them only as one great family, united by bonds of brotherly privilege and duty. His great appeal was not so much to the sense of personal patriotism, or directly to the sense of spiritual affinity, but first and foremost to the fraternal instincts of race-kinship.

This central thought of his life-work took complete possession of Arndt upon his return to Germany in 1813. Prose, invective, exhortation, still served his purpose when he addressed himself to those in whose hands rested the legitimate power of initiative; but when he spoke to his people, it was to give voice to a reality in their lives which he had come to perceive, and which he desired them to recognize with the same clearness. The nation was to be inspired to greater efforts by the consciousness of the silent motive already prompting its actions. It was not to be inspired by a new motive to a course not yet taken. The ideal of the preacher found its correlate in the actuality, and transformed preacher into poet. Popular feeling and popular aspirations were unveiled in his patriotic verse, and the people beheld one of the secrets of their national existence.

That his poetic diction should catch the martial strain, and his poetic visions garb themselves in the panoply of war, was inevitable. But battle and victory, freedom from French rule and political unity, — whatever the poet's theme, — assumed a new meaning and a permanent significance.

Drum auf, ihr Männer, auf ins Feld!

Drum auf, ihr *deutschen Brüder*!

* * * * *

Drum auf mit Jubelschalle

Und ruft und schwöret alle:

Wir sind und bleiben *Brüder*.

* * * * *

Als echte *deutsche Brüder*
 Hau'n wir die Räuber nieder,
 Die uns're Ehr' zerreißen.¹

Like the man himself, Arndt's patriotic lyrics were rough and ready, devoid of artistic polish. The range of his imagination was not broad, nor was its quality subtle, and his diction, though pithy, was deficient in variety and finer shadings. Such a nature and so limited poetic gifts demanded a theme intense in its directness, precise in its intensity, and impersonal in its comprehensive sweep. The magnificent spectacle of a nation rising in its wrath was what he best loved to see and was best able to picture: —

Nicht länger! Lass sausen! lass brausen!
 Lass lodern den heiligen Zorn!
 Und stosse dem Dränger zum Grausen
 Auf Bergen und Höhen ins Horn!
 Und blase der Rache Posaunen!
 Und ringe die Glocken vom Turm!
 Und schmettre den Klang der Kartaunen
 Ihm nach in gewaltigem Sturm!²

¹ Up then, my men, rise up to arms!
 Up then, ye German Brothers!

* * * * *

Up then, with new rejoicing
 Your oath in common voicing:
 We are and shall be brothers!

* * * * *

As German brothers true
 The robbers we pursue
 Who prey upon our honor.

— *Freudenklang*, written after the battle of Leipsic.

² Up, up! Let the storm shriek its wailing!
 Let fires of holy hate flare!
 Let over the enemy quailing
 From mountains your fierce bugle blare!
 And trumpet your rancorous anger!
 And peal forth alarum of bells!
 And hurl at him thunderous clangor,
 The storm of your cannon and shells!

— *Die Alten und die Neuen* (1812), 8th stanza.

His songs seem borne along upon the wings of the tempest, and his figures of speech are most effective when chosen from the tumult of the elements : —

Wie Herbstesstürme brausen,
Und wilde Meere sausen,
So kommen wir geflogen.

* * * * *

So kommen wir, so brausen wie
Und schwören vote Rache.¹

Again and again in simile or metaphor he returned to this vision of the warring elements. In his *Plaint for Love and Freedom*, written in 1807, at the death of his first wife and the concession to France of all territories west of the Rhine, Arndt for the first time compared the spirit of German nationality with a storm that must break : —

Doch wird der Rache Tag sich düster bläuen,
Geladen mit des Zorns Gewitterflut,
Wie Spreu im Winde wirst du dann zerstreuen
Die eit'len Wälschen, heil'ge deutsche Wut.²

And in these lines he first rose to poetic fervor. The other stanzas of this poem, especially those treating a theme of purely personal import, were little more than colorless versification. And the same criticism must be passed upon all his non-patriotic poems. Indeed, his lyre struck its best and fullest notes only during the wars. Many a sharp and bitter word, many a biting stanza, many a stinging metaphor, was wrung from the poet in the years following by the sight of princely ingratitude and royal abuse of the generous spirit of brotherhood that had freed the nation. Patriotic these later poems were ; but the rush of

¹ Like storms of autumn howling,
Wild seas in tumult growling,
On, on, our floodtide sweepeth.

* * * * *

And howling on, and sweeping on, —
Our vow is blood-red vengeance.

— *Der Freudenklang* (1813), from 4th and 5th stanzas.

² The day of wrath shall dark and purple lower,
And storm clouds laden be with vengeful fire ;
Like chaff before the wind the Welshmen's power
Shall scattered be by holy German ire.

passion was checked in the midst of its flow by the man's civic conservatism. The red flag of revolution had its unspeakable horrors, and since the same temper that dominated his war songs—if allowed to control his civic verse—meant revolution, he was deprived of the only poetic organ at his command. What could be more biting than the poem *Reign of Foxes* or more embittered than the poem *Unser Saal*, written in the same year, with its accusation:—

Wie heisst der Saal der hohen Schwelle?
 Wie heisst der blanke Ort der Quaal?
 Wie heisst die schöne Lügenhölle?
 Sie heisst auf Deutsch ein Königssaal?¹

Arndt's great mission as a poet ended therefore with the wars. The problems that confronted German life during the next decades were destined to receive their literary articulation at the hands of men who did not hesitate to draw the logical consequences of his idea of brotherhood. To Arndt there remained nothing but an appeal to the Most High:—

Siehe du drein,
 Mächtiger Gott!
 Räche die Pein!
 Räche den Spott!
 Und sind wir alle
 Fertig zum Fall
 Ende die Posse!
 Nimm die Geschosse!
 Nimm uns, o Gott!²

¹ Canst name the hall of proud desires?

Canst name the place of sufferings?

Canst name the gilded hell of liars?

'Tis named by Germans "Hall of Kings"!

— *Unser Saal* (1817), 4th stanza.

² Look not in vain,

God in Thy might!

Avenge Thou the pain!

Avenge Thou the slight!

And are we all

Ready to fall,

End Thou the farce!

Wing Thy quick darts!

God, speed our flight! — *Die Zeiten* (1817), last stanza.

His poetry became reflective. He longed to burst into full-throated strains and sing the song of freedom ; but the times sealed his lips :—

Auszujubeln, auszusingen,
Was das stille Herz nur weiss,
Und aus voller Brust zu klingen
Liebeslust und Himmelpreis.

But one thing had been attained, one idea had sprung into conscious life throughout the nation, however much the diplomacy of courts and princes might seem to belie its reality. Political unity of the German lands had become the watchword of the new generation, and the solidarity of the German-speaking race a thought cherished by the masses. And the three poets, Arndt, Körner, Schenkendorf, were inspired by this new reality. In their lyrics they immortalized the trinity of German patriotism foreshadowed by Schiller :—

Wir wollen sein ein enig Volk von Brüdern.

* * * * * *

Wir wollen frei sein, wie die Väter waren.

* * * * * *

Wir wollen trauen auf den höchsten Gott.¹

¹ We swear to be a single folk of brothers.

* * * * * *

We swear to be as free as were our fathers.

* * * * * *

We swear to put our trust in God Most High.

— *Wilhelm Tell*, Act. II, 2.

CHAPTER IV

THE REDEMPTION OF ROMANTIC POETRY THROUGH THE NATIONAL MOVEMENT

POETRY INTERPRETS THE MORAL SUSCEPTIBILITY OF THE
GERMANS FOR NATURE LIFE, AND THE SIGNIFICANCE OF
FOLK-IDEALS

EICHENDORFF, UHLAND

THE cry of the earlier romanticists, "Back to nature!" meant much or little, according to the interpretation each gave to the term "nature." Its import was therefore so vague that it failed to carry conviction, and this in spite of the fact that the principle involved has since become the basic principle of artistic production. For it meant, if it meant anything, that in a work of art the bald, soulless facts of space or time are vitalized with the consciousness of the artist's day and generation. Unfortunately this new principle was proclaimed at a time when German artists or poets could not be inspired by national or racial consciousness. Accordingly, in practice, the principle led to the creation of works reflecting only the artist's own petty and wavering personality. One looks in vain for a truly poetic glorification of life in all the literary attempts of the early romantic school, unless it be in the works of Novalis. His gentle mysticism responded to moods of which modern life is at least fitfully conscious.

That these romanticists were well aware of the disparity between their practice and their theory, is sufficiently attested. There was a large measure of reason in their contention that poetry could and would not flourish until the time came when the people should take a common attitude toward the phenom-

enal facts of life or the individual find and feel his spiritual life related to that of his countrymen. The romantic efforts to infuse this life-blood into poetic subjectivity through artificial stimulants necessarily failed. They were premature and therefore so often absurd and fantastic. The mere choice of literary material from the legendary or historic past of the Germanic people could not vitalize a production and give it poetic reality. Tieck and Fouqué tried in vain to interpret myth, legend, and history through their own insufficient subjectivity. Their stories and dramas are most convincing evidence that the spiritual essence of contemporary German life was not revealed to them in the old sagas and heroic tales unearthed by the academicians. For the people did not discern in these works truths that were vital to its present or future well-being. They possessed none of that permanent symbolic value which rooted deep in the inner consciousness of the German race.

Though the national awakening in Germany seems to and did denote a revulsion against certain phases of romantic thought and practice, it was not incompatible with the romantic doctrine. In fact, it supplied in a measure the element of unified public consciousness theoretically demanded by the romanticists, and focussed the attention of poets on the present living thought of the people. Despite scientific inaccuracies, Arnim and Bretano's collections of German folk-songs, in the successive editions of *Des Knaben Wunderhorn*, did more for the advancement of German poetry than all the fantastic poetizing that had preceded. For these collections revealed something of the innate character of the German race, or rather they proved that this people was unconsciously dominated by great common ideals. The recognition of this truth was the poetic salvation of Kleist, as it became shortly thereafter the supreme inspiration of the poetry of the Wars of Liberation. In both cases, however, the great common ideal of national political unity so far overshadowed in importance all other phases of the common attitude toward life, that these latter seldom came to vitalized poetic expression.

Foremost among these neglected racial characteristics was the moral susceptibility of Germans for natural phenomena, their peculiar proneness to associate a prevailing mood with certain aspects of the world of nature, and assign to this world a sentient life, quickened by the joys and sorrows of the human heart. True, romanticists like Tieck, Novalis, the Brothers Schlegel, Fouqué, or E. T. A. Hoffmann had likewise sought to animate nature, but necessarily only with purely subjective moods and frequently only with conceits that hardly attained even to the semblance of genuine feeling. Estranged from the great heart of the people by their genteel speculations, all these writers were capable of imparting to nature only an allegorical, rarely a symbolic, human significance; for the character of their conceptions was scarcely conditioned by living contact with the people. They failed, therefore, to interpret to the people its moral susceptibility for nature life.

Joseph von Eichendorff, mentioned in the previous chapter in connection with the patriotic lyrics of the Wars of Liberation, was one of the first poets affiliated with the early romantic movement, whose sensitive response to the beauties of nature was influenced by the wistful nature-sense of his countrymen. As a youth he loved to perch in the branches of a favorite tree and read the old tales of the folk (*Volksbücher*) unearthed in his father's library. The beautiful Silesian countryside, spreading at his feet, first brought him close to the deep, and yet so genuinely simple life of these folk-stories, and they in turn imparted to the landscape its first human significance. These youthful experiences gave to Eichendorff's poetic consciousness a peculiar bent that it ever afterward maintained.

Few German poets have so identified the changing aspects of nature: waning and returning seasons, flitting clouds, rippling rivulets, rising and setting moon and sun, brightening and fading stars, and the flight of birds in their passage with ever-changing moods of the human soul. But he ill deserved the title of a poetic vagabond, applied to him largely because of his many *Wayfaring Songs* and the short story *The Good-for-nothing* (*Aus dem Leben eines Taugenichts*). Such criticism disre-

gards Eichendorff's equally sympathetic identification of certain permanent aspects of nature with some of those constant and invariable emotions that are ever coming to the surface of human consciousness. The poet who could write of spring-time:—

Und das Wirren bunt und bunter
Wird ein magisch wilder Fluss,
In die schöne Welt hinunter
Lockt dich dieses Stromes Gruss.¹

also sang:—

Da steht im Wald geschrieben
Ein stilles, ernstes Wort
Von rechtem Thun und Lieben,
Und was des Menschen Hort.²

Nor should it be supposed that Eichendorff was incapable of appreciating both of these two aspects at the same time. Most frequently a vague longing for change and variety seems indeed to have controlled his mood. However, when one comes to know the true character of these poems, it is apparent that not the novelty, but the rhythmic constancy in this changing life of nature was the keynote of his song. He sang of an eternal concord in finite life. Identifying with this nature life the vacillating emotional life of his countrymen, he came not merely to glorify nature with the conscious life of man, but to transfigure human restlessness with the final harmony of an infinite life. Consistently, therefore, Eichendorff could say to his pilgrim seeking for the great solvent of human longing:—

So Stürz' dich einmal Geselle.
Nur frisch in die Frühlingswelle!

¹ And the quivering whir, fast speeding,
Forms a magic streaming swirl,
Lures you with seductive pleading
Down into the beauteous world.

— *Frische Fahrt*, 1810. First poem of the *Wayfaring Songs*.

² A word of solemn meaning
Writ in the quiet wood:
Of true love, honest dealing,
And mankind's highest good. — *Abschied*, 1815.

Da spürst du's im Innersten gleich,
Wo's rechte Himmelreich.¹

Eichendorff's subjectivity had struck its roots in the life of the Silesian folk, and it drew from this source the main sustenance of its productivity. His poetry could, therefore, not fail to win its way into the hearts of the people. Poems like *The Broken Ringlet* or *Farewell* are felt and treated by every German as the spontaneous expression of his own soul.

For all that, Eichendorff's poetry of nature was not great, nor can it truly be called profound. The limitations of its source were unavoidable limitations of its range. Sweet and wholesome it always was, rounding out the circle of its vision in a form sufficient unto itself. The world of appearances and the world of conscious life each saturated with and saturating the other, coalesced in the ideal realism of his poetry. But this new world lacked breadth and depth. At times one may dwell in it with perfect contentment; at others the human soul longs impatiently to extend the narrow circle and include experiences lying beyond. There were moments when Eichendorff himself felt thus, moments when the lines escaped him:—

Mein irres Singen hier
Ist wie ein Rufen nur aus Träumen.²

or when the dim consciousness of the profundity of life wrested from him the confession:—

Die Lieder, die ich stammelnd hören lasse,
Ew'ger Gefühle schwaches Widerspiel —
Sie sind es wahrlich auch nicht, was ich meine.
Denn ewig unerreichbar ist das Eine.³

¹ Then lustily plunge without urging
Deep into the springtide surging;
The sense of heaven's true rest
Will answer there your quest. — *Aufgebot*.

² The voice of my errant song
Is no more than the voice of a dream.
— *Nachtwanderer*, 1826.

³ The songs my stammering tongue proclaims,
Faint reflex of eternal aspiration —
Forsooth e'en they state not my meaning plain,
For to the one and all we never may attain.

The titanic in nature and the complexity of the apparently simple both remained beyond the reach of his poetic consciousness. For the conservatism of his South-German rearing closed his eyes to the poetic significance of the elemental conflicts in nature, and the apparent naïveness of Silesian country life and folk-sentiment precluded a full conscious realization of the intricate complexion of human volition. Loving his German fatherland with sincere affection, he yet failed to voice in his poems of nature the titanic convulsions in the life of the nation; and longing for the deep, full current of human existence, he was forced to content himself with observing the ripples on the surface. Hence the note of dreamy, restless content in so many of his poems.

Eichendorff's own words at the close of his novel, *Forebodings and the Present* (*Ahnung und Gegenwart*), best characterize his inability to comprehend the great trend of contemporary German life: "Our age, it seems to me, may be likened unto a far-reaching, uncertain twilight. Lights and shadows, as yet unparted, battle mightily with each other in wondrous masses, dark foreboding clouds drift in between, uncertain whether fraught with death or blessing, and the world below waits in great, dull, silent expectation."

Akin to this temper of Eichendorff's muse was the poetic consciousness of his great contemporary, Ludwig Uhland. The intrinsic beauty of his poetry was of the same quality as Eichendorff's, only more humanly profound and complex in its simplicity.

Uhland, very early in life, reached the height of his poetic ability and the limit of his poetic productivity. Of this productivity, two volumes were the final measure, and of his verse nearly three-fourths was written before his thirtieth year.

An explanation for this fact has been sought in the peculiarly spasmodic character of his poetic gift and his well-known reluctance to force his poetic imagination. To this reluctance one may well ascribe the uniform excellence of all his work.

The fitful nature of his imagination was in a large measure

determined by the external conditions of his life. Uhland wrote few spring songs in springtime; his pen contributed little to the wealth of poetry called forth by the year 1813; personal and domestic affairs did not move him to poetic rapture or resentment, and yet he was in intimate touch with his environment. His poetry is the best illustration and the practical justification of the romantic theory of art stated in the outset of the present chapter. Of all poets of the century he was preëminently dependent upon impressions from without. One may even liken his poetic consciousness to a reflex action of the soul responding instinctively to every intellectual cognition of mass-ideals.

Historians of German literature have grouped Uhland, J. Kerner, G. Schwab, E. Mörike, W. Hauff, and others as a Suabian school of poetry. Infelicitous as this grouping may be, since these poets were but slightly concerned with developing a particular theory of technique, it yet recognizes in their verse the existence of a common quality due to common traditions.

The most characteristic traits of the Suabian people were then, as they are to this day, reducible to local pride. Their political horizon did not extend beyond the borders of their own small country; their social instincts shrank from contact with everything that might disturb the snugness of territorial domesticity; and their spiritual vision was sublimely content with its restricted periscope. However, this limiting sense of locality had its compensations. If the more cosmopolitan North Germans were apt to be vague and discursive in intellectual concepts and sentimental effects, the South Germans, in particular the Suabians, were given to precision and definiteness. In place of intense personal individuality there was developed a social individuality, a comradeship in thought and feeling. The life of the individual was, therefore, broader, though communal life necessarily lacked the varied and many-sided expression of individuality to be found in countries to the north. General traits of this kind have to be reckoned with, if a just estimate of Uhland's poetry and that of his countrymen is to be gained.

For Uhland was, in this respect, a Suabian of good old stock, and as averse to contact with that which failed to fit into well-worn grooves of thought and sentiment, as he was responsive to congenial fellowship and to ideals in sympathy with Suabian customs and traditions. His whole temper was conservative. It hardly permitted him to feel a sense of personal isolation. Accordingly, his poems are as a whole devoid of the fiery passion which voices the protest of the individual who feels that life antagonizes his volition.

Uhland was born in Tübingen, 1787. He was, therefore, in the full flush of his young manhood when Germany felt the heavy hand of Napoleon, and finally shook off its grip. Nevertheless, his poetry of these years was not fired by the patriotic fervor of Kleist or the national passion of Körner, Arndt, or Schenkendorf. For Kleist's patriotic ideals were conditioned by his subjective isolation, and their poetic formulation eased the tension of a soul chafing under this isolation. When Kleist finally came to recognize the national potentiality of his personal ideals, the hot flame of passion sank back into the subdued glow of his last drama. The patriotic poets of the Wars of Liberation were for their part swept away by the passionate awakening of an entire country, and their poetry voiced not so much a personal as a national protest against suppression. Of such intense personal or national feeling Uhland was incapable. Poetry was never a personal matter with him: "I never had any leaning toward poetry *per se*, dissociated from the people, expressing only individual sentiments. Whatever attracted me had its root in the people, its customs, its religion. Even in my boyhood I thus viewed poetry."

On the other hand, the "people" meant in those days for the poet Uhland—as it did for his contemporary William Hauff—not the entire German populace, but his own particular Suabian folk. And this folk was conscious of its own individuality, and in this consciousness averse to merging its identity in the nation at large. That Württemberg allied itself with the cause of Napoleon and did not officially sever this alliance until 1814, was due primarily to the diplomatic scheming of its ruler; but that

its populace finally forced a rupture of these bonds was not so much the result of a livelier sense of the national cohesion of German states as the consequence of injured local pride. For the Napoleonic alliance had not only changed the old duchy into a kingdom and embodied in this kingdom territories not of Suabian stock, but had also subverted the constitution of the land.

Shall one, then, disparage Uhland's patriotism because his over-great affection for Suabian life and its institutions hardly permitted the great themes of political unity and national independence to assume poetic vitality? Shall one infer that the deepest import of national life left no mark upon his poetry because he failed to sing the enraptured song of national unity and freedom, and had words of poetic fervor only for the desecrated laws of his narrower fatherland? Surely not. All his harping on the "Good Old Right" had a deeper significance. If the importance of a just and honorable local pride for national growth and for the solution of national problems was ever clearly made manifest, it was so manifested through the poetic activity of Uhland, not to mention his activity as a scholar and civic leader. And Friedrich Vischer was right when he called Uhland "one of the shining examples of perfectly balanced love of country in its narrower and wider meaning."

To comprehend the national scope of Uhland's verse, one must realize the positive influence exerted by his Suabian birth. This influence was twofold. It enabled the poet to draw his inspiration from the very wellsprings of folk-life, and it gave to the romantic idea of freedom a conciseness, to be found, perhaps, in no other poet of that day, unless it be Arndt.

Though Uhland justified through his poetry what was really sound in the artistic views of the romantic school proper, he was little concerned with its theories. Closely associated with Fouqué, he passed beyond the sphere of his influence. Technically, his poetry shows very few ear-marks of German romanticism. So far as it was romantic, it was so either in the common, everyday acceptance of that term, or in the fact that it received its suggestions from domains to which these roman-

ticists had called attention. But these suggestions were in their very nature totally different from those derived by members of that school from the same source. Uhland's Suabian temperament aided him in solving the poetic problem they had merely defined.

The old heroic romances appealed to his consciousness in quite a different manner, if not also in a higher degree, than they did to Tieck's, to Schlegel's, or to Fouqué's. Intuitively, not as a result of academic reasoning, he appreciated their charm. For him, the spirit that animated them was from the very start associated with the living sentiment of his generation. To be sure, his interpretation of this spirit was at first inadequate, inasmuch as his own appreciation of the vital values of his environment was youthfully crude and imperfect. The physical facts of narrative and setting Uhland very early measured with a keen eye and these he reproduced with facile pen; but the true human significance of legend or tale his genius could not shape into well-defined, plastic visions, until his consciousness of Suabian folk-characteristics clarified and deepened. It was then that his narrative poetry sloughed off its crudities.

Early ballads like *The Castle by the Sea*, *The Nun*, *The Blind King* (version of 1804), though plastic in their description of externals, were shadowy and blurred of outline in their portrayal of human character and temperament. But they were later followed by *Childe Roland* (1808), *The Goldsmith's Daughter* (1809), *Taillefer* (1812), *Count Eberhard Rauschebart* (1815), *Bertran de Born* (1829), *The Luck of Edenhall* (1834), and other ballads in which the eternal verities of life were poetically realized, because the poet had gained more than an inkling of their nature. Morose and often sombre resignation was superseded by a cheerful, manly attitude toward the tragic.

A similar process may be traced in his treatment of mythological material. Few poems came from his pen that dealt directly with incidents of Germanic mythology. But the first of these, *The Dying Heroes* (1804), made it clear that Uhland was destined to find other values in this mythology than the

purely subjective interpretations of Fouqué, or the soulless pedantic conceptions of more modern erudition. His interest in myths became that of the poet-scholar. He gloried in the present human significance of his work, seeking to discover a kinship of deepest human sentiment between conceptions of mythology (Thor) and the ideals of modern German thought.

We owe these results to Uhland's loving research in the field of German folk-song; and this research had its reward for the poet as well as the scholar. The intense social instinct of Uhland caused German folk-song to reveal to him the full charm of that deep perspective of ancient story which had stirred and engaged his imagination. Love, religion, and the laws of nature became concrete values, and the forces in human life that determine the relations of man to his fellow-men, to the Infinite, and to the unconscious world of sense — changed from mystic abstractions into exact yet abiding realities. Eminently justified by Uhland's lyric verse were the last stanzas of the poem *The Poppy* (1829): —

In meiner Tage Morgen
 Da lag auch ich einmal
 Von Blumen ganz geborgen
 In einem schönen Thal.
 Sie dufteten so milde;
 Da ward, ich fühl't' es kaum,
 Das Leben mir zum Bilde,
 Das Wirkliche zum Traum.
 Seitdem ist mir beständig,
 Als wär' es nur so recht,
 Mein Bild der Welt lebendig,
 Mein Traum nur wahr und echt.
 Die Schatten, die ich sehe,
 Sie sind wie Sterne klar,
 O Mohn der Dichtung wehe
 Ums Haupt mir immerdar.¹

¹ In life's young morning hours,
 I, too, was thus bested;
 Amid a vale of flowers
 I laid my weary head.
 Then softly, in a minute,

Definite direction was first given to Uhland's groping genius by Arnim and Brentano's *Wunderhorn*. A few of his poems written previous to the appearance of the *Wunderhorn* showed marked traces of true folk-sentiment, e.g. *Gretchen's Joy*, *The Chapel*, *The Gentle Days*, *The King on the Tower*; but the full flow of Uhland's lyric verse did not set in until he became intimate with the ideals of folk-life expressed in folk-song.

The reciprocal influence of his folk-lore studies on his poetry and of his poetic Suabian nature on these studies has formed the topic of various essays and investigations and may now be taken for granted. To separate his poetry into poems of love, religion, and nature would therefore be manifestly incongruous, since, as in folk-song proper, these three elements blended into one and formed a new symbolic reality, albeit a reality of more perfect artistic form and poetic grace. The symbols for the aspirations of the human heart and the human soul which Uhland took from nature harmonized always with the natural instinct of his Suabian folk.

Personally Uhland could appreciate the more violent transitions in nature, — storm and lightning, the tossing seas, the uproar of the elements. But like Eichendorff, he was rarely able to make poetic use of them; they contained for him no symbolic human values. Gentler transitions in nature spoke most forcibly to his Suabian temperament. In the message these brought him he read the meaning of German nationality and the glory of German patriotism. For Uhland was not

Arose their fragrant steam,
Life look'd a picture in it,
The Real became a Dream !
Since then, all else misgiving,
No thought but this will do —
My pictured world's the living,
My dream's the pure and true.
The shades that flit before me,
Are clear as stars to ken ;
Wave poet poppy o'er me,
Forever wave as then.

— Translation by ALEXANDER PLATT.

content to observe superficially. He sought to penetrate to the inner life and character of his people, and in so doing he perceived that their love of nature "rested upon the universal yearning to see human existence placed in fellowship with all creation." This insight gave to his poetry a profound perspective. He found great catholic ideals supporting local idiosyncrasies. To these ideals he gave their appropriate artistic settings, and became a supremely national poet. Uhland was right: every great striving must be inspired by loving occupation with the small things of life. Humanitarian ideals are but vague impracticalities unless they spring from an appreciative knowledge of narrower spheres of the social order. To the lines put into the mouth of the critic that accused him of petty aims: —

Du hast das Ganze nicht erfasst,
Der Menschheit grossen Schmerz! ¹

he was therefore entitled to reply: —

Du meinst es löblich, doch du hast
Für unser Volk kein Herz! ²

As late as 1839, Friedrich Hebbel wrote, "German and dramatic are opposite terms." There was no little justification for this remark. German life of the first four decades offered little hope for a national drama. Uhland's dramatic ventures were beyond question noble expressions of national ideals; but dramatic masterpieces they were not. His dramatic energy was not robust. He left a considerable number of undeveloped and unexecuted dramatic themes. He completed and gave to the world only two dramas, *Duke Ernest of Suabia* and *Ludwic of Bavaria*.

If it is true that a great drama always presents an ideal striving to realize itself through action under the limitations placed upon human existence, it must follow that this ideal may be determined by a negative attitude taken by the poet toward the phenomena of life. Such an attitude characterized Kleist's

¹ Thou failest to comprehend the All,
Humanity's great woe!

² Thou meanest well; our folk withal
Sets not thy heart aglow. — *Gespräch*, 1816.

early dramas. But it may also be the result of a clear recognition and affirmation of latent forces in a social order, large or small, struggling to acquire conscious social existence. Kleist's last drama illustrates the second type.

It is clear that Uhland could not conceive or write a drama inspired by negative ideals. It is not perhaps so clear why he failed to attain greatness as a dramatist of affirmation. Yet such was the case. His complete identification with local ideas constituted an insuperable barrier to dramatic conception. On the one hand it eliminated, as has been pointed out, the element of personal isolation without which negative ideals never attain dramatic force; on the other, it limited the range of social ideals to a restricted sphere, moreover a sphere in which ideal forces appeared not as latent or potential, but as dominant and self-evident qualities of the social organism.

Uhland's prologue to *Ernest of Suabia*, written in the year following the publication of the tragedy, indicates beyond peradventure the ideal tendency of this drama: —

Das ist der Fluch des unglücksel'gen Landes,
Wo Freiheit und Gesetz darnieder liegen,
Dass sich die Besten und die Edelsten
Verzehren müssen in fruchtlosem Harm,
Dass, die für 's Vaterland am reinsten glühn,
Gebrandmarkt werden als des Lands Verräter,
Und die noch jüngst des Landes Retter hiessen,
Sich flüchten müssen an des Fremden Herd.
Und während so die beste Kraft verdirbt,
Erbühen, wuchernd in der Hölle Segen,
Gewaltthat, Hochmut, Feigheit, Schergendienst.
Wie anders, wenn aus sturmbewegter Zeit
Gesetz und Ordnung, Freiheit sich und Recht
Einporgerungen und sich festgepflanzt!

* * * * *

Des Fürsten und des Volkes Rechte sind
Verwoben wie sich Ulm und Reb' umschlingen,
Und für des Heiligtums Verteidigung
Steht jeder freudig ein mit Gut und Blut.¹

¹ It is the curse of every luckless land
Where liberty and law are prostrate fall'n
That in a fruitless, unavailing grief

Justification of the "Good Old Right" was the impelling motive of the drama. When Uhland was busy with this drama, he was also writing his "patriotic" poems, in which he took a valiant stand for the ancient constitution of Suabia, closing the last of these poems, *Epilogue* (1817), with the lines: —

Kein Herold wird's den Völkern künden
Mit Pauken- und Trommetenschall,
Und dennoch wird es Wurzel schlagen
In deutschen Gauen überall,
Dass Weisheit nicht das Recht begraben,
Noch Wohlfahrt es ersetzen mag,
Dass bei dem biedern Volk der Schwaben
Das Recht besteht und der Vertrag.¹

It was thus distinctly a civic problem that Uhland sought to invest with dramatic life. The historic theme which he chose certainly contained dramatic possibilities of the first magnitude,

The best, the noblest souls must pine away ;
That they who feel the purest patriot glow
Must branded be as traitors to their country ;
Whilst they, but just now hailed their country's saviours,
Must fly for refuge to the stranger's hearth.
And while the choicest power goes to wreck,
Fell Arrogance and coward Minionage
Spring up luxuriant in the breath of hell.
How different is it, when, from stormy times,
Law, Order, Liberty, and manly Rights
Rise struggling up and strike a healthy root.

* * * * *

The Prince's and the People's Rights are one,
Like closely interwoven elm and vine ;
And every one to guard the sacred bond
Is fain to spend his substance and his blood.

— Translation by ALEXANDER PLATT.

¹ No herald spreads the news abroad
With beat of drum and trumpet-call,
Yet unproclaimed 'twill strike its roots
In every land of German soil ;
That Right shall not succumb to Wisdom,
Prosperity make shift therefore,
That 'mid the honest folk of Suabia
Right rules and ancient compact's law.

and the civic problem was of itself by no means devoid of dramatic elements of the highest order. Nevertheless, Uhland failed to weld both into a stirring tragedy. Why this failure?

The long-drawn-out contention of the Suabian estates for reënactment of the old law of the land began in 1815. Poetically speaking, it was devoid of dramatic character, since it was concerned with readjustment of fortuitous external conditions to a particular civic theory which was then, as it always had been, the recognized ideal of the Suabian populace. The interest of Uhland was, therefore, aroused by phenomena in the political life of his countrymen that did not signify a conflict of ideals in its social life. There was no such conflict in Suabia. The ideal which Uhland sought to depict was a social reality, and this fact made it impossible for him to see his ideal in dramatic conflict with the inertia of human consciousness. He himself wrote : —

Zu unserm König, deinem Knecht,
Kann nicht des Volkes Stimme kommen ;
Hätt' er sie, wie er will, vernommen,
Wir hätten längst das teure Recht.¹

One might reply to this argument, that *Ernest of Suabia* was distinctly national in its scope, and that beyond the confines of Suabia the social mind was still vaguely striving to formulate a new ideal of the relation of populace to ruler. This was true, so true that even the poets of the Wars of Liberation on the whole had but hazy visions of civic freedom. The full meaning of the word "citizen," as distinguished from "subject," had only begun to dawn upon popular consciousness of Germany at large. But in Uhland's vocabulary the word "subject" never existed. The ruler of the land was such only by a civic contract. He reigned by the grace of the people under the terms of a mutual agreement. That other German states had not

¹ The people's voice has not yet reached
Our king's, thy servant's, listening ear ;
For had he heard it, as he would,
Our cherished Right had long been ours.

— *Gebet eines Württembergers*, 1817.

this conception of the monarchical prerogative was something that Uhland was incapable of realizing. He judged them by his own light and could, therefore, maintain that each German state ought first to feel its own individuality and attain to an arrangement of its internal affairs commensurate with this individuality before any real unity of the German states could be secured. In this spirit he could upbraid the German states, not because their people were not fully alive to the ideal of civic freedom, but because they had not established the equivalent form of government: —

Zermalnt habt ihr die fremden Horden,
Doch innen hat sich nichts gehellt,
Und Freie seid ihr nicht geworden,
Wenn ihr das Recht nicht *festgestellt*.¹

Therefore, it could well happen that the vital dramatic spark was not struck even when the poetic genius of Uhland came in contact with national life. Moreover, *Ernest of Suabia* treated a national theme in primary historic relation to the Suabian state.

The attempt has been made to place Uhland's dramas upon a pedestal of greatness which disinterested critics and even his most intimate friends have not accorded them. This is particularly true of his second completed drama, *Ludwig of Bavaria*. The play was written in competition for a prize offered by the court-theatre of Munich for a drama treating some theme of Bavarian history with proper avoidance of political conditions. The terms of the award reacted upon the drama itself and prevented free and spontaneous dramatization. The intentions of Uhland were to give poetic reality to his great ideal of German character and race-unity. They were not realized because this ideal was not suggested by his chosen theme, but arbitrarily injected into it. The story had for Uhland no primary symbolic

¹ Ye've crushed the hordes of fierce invaders,
But light has not dispelled your night,
And free men ye may not be called
If ye have not *established* Right.

— Am 18. Oktober 1816.

significance, such as folk-lore had possessed, but was treated as an allegory, as a convenient vehicle for presenting his ideas in concrete form.

That in many respects, *Ludwic of Bavaria* was superior to *Ernest of Suavia*, cannot be gainsaid. The dramatic plot is more compact, the delineation of character more concise, and the portrayal of passion more dramatic. Effective both plays are, most effective in their basic conception of great national ideals. But no criticism can raise them to the level of the world's masterpieces of dramatic art. Of Uhland's great love for his German fatherland they give sterling evidence, and they well deserve, even for the sake of their sturdy literary worth, to be resurrected from oblivion.

Uhland has been accused of blocking the way for the reform of the Suabian constitution, of harking back to the past because it was the past, of failing to interpret the great civic movement of his day. Nothing could be farther from the truth. Uhland was conservative, but conservative only because conservatism meant in his case insistence upon the great principles of civic freedom. He fought for the principle of unshackled citizenship upon which the old compact rested, for the principle of merit as the determining factor in human relations. Truer words were never written in those earlier days of awakened civic activity than the words in Uhland's essay which compare the old with the proposed new constitution. Of the old, he says: "Bourbon legitimacy there is none therein: it denotes the social relation of free, rational beings. To the ruler it assigns his place from which the rationalism of the day will not thrust him; to the populace it accords a position which even a people of enlightened conceptions of human dignity may accept. . . . Prate not to us of the Sons of God and the Sons of Men, compare not birth with merit! Aristocratic prejudices we will not endure!"

No, years ago (1863), Berthold Auerbach, stamped though he was with the pessimism of Schopenhauer, spoke truer words of Uhland, words that find their echo in the hearts of the great populace of Germany: "His life is the epitome of the spirit of civic freedom that has moved Germany for the last fifty years."

CHAPTER V

RÉGIME METTERNICH

TYPICAL FORERUNNERS OF THE POETRY OF NEGATION

HÖLDERLIN AND CHAMISSO, PLATEN AND RAIMUND

WHEN the Congress of Vienna ushered in the so-called Restoration, princely diplomacy and selfish fear robbed the people of the fruits of their struggle. Patriots like Arndt, Gneisenau, Scharnhorst, Wilhelm von Humboldt, Stein, and so many others were made to feel the heavy hand of royal displeasure for insisting upon the fulfilment of royal promises. The notorious decrees of Carlsbad throttled the young press of the country and placed institutions of learning under police supervision. Again, the peasantry found itself practically at the mercy of the landed nobility, and the best civic reforms initiated by Napoleon were heedlessly abrogated along with the worst. National unity, the great hope of the people, was frustrated. Germany remained a nation of disjointed principalities dominated by Metternich's principle of Bourbon legitimacy. It "waited in dull and silent expectation." The young men who had participated in the spirited enthusiasm of the German uprising were brought face to face with a state of public affairs the meaning of which they could not read or were restrained from glorifying through their inborn conservatism. In Württemberg an Uhland read the signs of the times and exalted the liberal ideal of citizenship to poetic dignity. It was a pardonable mistake that he should overestimate the extent to which liberal ideas of civic freedom had permeated the masses of the German-speaking populace, and should assume the existence of well-defined civic ideals among the populace at large.

The wars with France had indeed caused to be formulated in the consciousness of the masses a clear idea of national political freedom and national political unity. They had also stimulated the sense of direct personal interest in affairs of state and the feeling of racial homogeneity. But so far as the consciousness of the great mass was concerned, these wars had provided no more than the leaven for civic ferment. People were only just beginning to feel that their personal interest in the fatherland might entail a change in their relation to the state. The clamor for reorganization of the army upon the basis of a citizen-soldiery was the first crude demand for recognition of a new civic principle.

Patriotic statesmen were quick to realize the essential trend of popular sentiment, and sought to bring the laws of the land into harmony with the secret aspirations of their people. But the German princes were as quick to foresee the inevitable curtailment of dynastic prerogatives involved in the changes these statesmen proposed. In the absence of any well-defined popular demand for civic freedom, patriots were powerless to carry through their reforms. The problem became one of practical politics, as we use the term to-day; *i.e.* a question of securing as great and granting as small concessions as possible to meet the unrest of the day. German civic life was in a chaotic state.

Until this chaos was illumined by the light of reason, it could offer only negative inspiration to the artistic desire for harmony between the world of appearances and the world of ideas. Poetry fell back on purely subjective interpretations of life and nature, grappled single-handed with the deepest metaphysical problems of human existence, turned away from an all too incongruous present and an all too problematical national life, and delved in the apparently richer and more harmonious forms of other times and other peoples.

Still, the instinct of race had been aroused, and refused to be crushed out again by political chicaneries. Of the three great phases of patriotic nationalism emphasized by the war-poets, the one represented in the poems of Schenkendorf, and most succinctly and concretely humanized in Uhland's verse, was

the first to call for clearer enunciation among the non-Swabian Germans. What was this peculiar spiritual temper of the German race? Was it anything more than a fantastic dream? And if so, what were the evidences of its reality, and the distinctive qualities of its human value? Questions like these began to demand more specific replies than either Schenkendorf or the earlier romanticists had been able to give.

If North Germany had no Uhland to couch these replies in poetic visions, it had its scholarly sponsors: its Grimms, its Humboldts, and its Ranke. Something more than inquisitive interest in forgotten lore, something more than the selfish pleasure of the student recluse, inspired their activity. Their scholarship never lost sight of the present. Through their philological researches the Brothers Grimm ever sought to reveal the vital quality of the current German vernacular, the wealth of ethical truth in the picturesque simplicity of German thought, and great common ideals in time-honored German customs and institutions. Viewing their life-work in the light of its patriotic motives and far-reaching consequences for clarification and consolidation of the essential elements of national spirit, one cannot help feeling that they did better to treat language, mythology, and antiquities as German rather than Germanic. Their profound investigations were touched with the poetry of patriotism, and this made these investigations, faulty though their conclusions necessarily were in many minor details, an infinitely greater power in the upbuilding of Germany than all the erudite researches of academic learning since their day. Under the stress of an unsatisfied, because vague, longing for a practical reorganization of human affairs, German scholarship became thoroughly human.

Wilhelm von Humboldt retired from an office that flouted his statesmanship, and wrote his celebrated *Letters to a Friend*. His brother Alexander set himself the task of making available to his countrymen the rich treasures of his mind. The *Cosmos*, that wonderfully synthetic study of natural phenomena, was destined to broaden the provincialism of the Germans in their attitude toward nature. And out of the same great desire to

get at the significance of present day reality sprang the historical studies and works of Leopold von Ranke.

Conditions that were meet for the investigator and the rational searcher after permanent truths in this troubled transition period were, however, unfit to supply positive poetic themes. Poetry never goes in search for ideal truths. It perceives them more or less distinctly, and if it seeks for anything, that something is the living form in which these truths may have their being realized. When the manifestations of life themselves portend a higher form of human activity, then poetry may find its positive themes and round out the circle of its effort in creations of artistic completeness. Meanwhile it becomes the duty of scholarship to search for the portents of the times. But when the meaning of these manifestations must first be read through the loop of rational analysis, a work that wholly satisfies the artistic temper has yet to be found in literature. It may point to poetic creations that accord with conventional canons of literary criticism, that stir us with their passionate appeal or solemn protest, or even touch chords of human nature which vibrate all too infrequently and sluggishly; but not to works that produce sublime, unquestioning confidence in their reality, — a reality satisfying the fundamental aspirations of our own lives because it transforms the potential factors thereof into conscious forces.

That loving contemplation of the actuality which was characteristic of the period preceding the Restoration was not possible under the régime of Metternich. The personal factor assumed paramount importance. The individual felt himself isolated, thrown back on his own resources, set in judgment on his generation. To all but the deeply earnest scholar, collective life seemed robbed of every initiative for good. When the German public crowded to see the weird artificialities of Müllner and Houwald, it manifested precisely this attitude. Humanity appeared in these plays incapable of modelling its own destiny, and given over, not to the guidance of a supreme teleological power, but to the operations of irrational chance.

Under such conditions German poetry could not preserve its affirmative temper. It did not necessarily become pessimistic in the sense that it denied the possibility of human progress, but it did become pessimistic in that it looked for this progress to come through some superhuman being. It treated existing social phenomena as totally barren of ideal tendencies, and set its own ideals over against this imponderable reality. Poetry again began to articulate that passionate craving for a new world-order which nearly half a century before had controlled the youthful imagination of Goethe. The titanic individual in his revolt against human limitations, or in his effort to put the stamp of his own personality upon his age, became the typical ideal of creative poets.

Two poets whose beginnings antedate the reactionary movement, but whose relations to German life were fortuitously similar to those of Grillparzer, Lenau, Grabbe, and others, furnish striking illustrations of the negative force that was soon to be exerted on poetic temperaments in the years of reaction. Adalbert von Chamisso and Friedrich Hölderlin foreshadowed the poetry of negation, as Schiller foreshadowed that of affirmation.

As men and poets, Chamisso and Hölderlin had little in common except their negative attitude toward German life. Both were to be sure extremely sensitive and unpractical, and in their own way intensely in earnest. But Chamisso was not the dreamer that Hölderlin was. He had his idiosyncracies, but they did not constitute the sum-total of his conscious being. To a far greater degree than in Hölderlin's case, his isolation was due to accidental conditions. Chamisso's French blood brought with it a secret love for empiric life, which asserted itself in his poetry of later years. Hölderlin was temperamentally unfitted to cope with life, unless perchance with some such impossible form as he sought to conjure into poetic existence. Gradually he alienated himself completely from the habit of human thinking and living, and years before his death, insanity claimed him as its victim.

A social order of which both had no real sympathetic under-

standing, was the common background to the poetic creations of Chamisso and Hölderlin.

Nine years old Chamisso was deprived of home and country by the French Revolution. His parents were forced in 1790 to flee from their estate Boncourt in Champagne, and finally, in 1796, succeeded in interesting Queen Louise of Prussia in behalf of their youngest son. Entering her service as page, Chamisso qualified a few years later for the military career. In this he remained against his own inclination, unable to shake off the galling fetters, until the campaign of Napoleon and the capitulation of Hameln, where Chamisso was stationed, set him free.

As this uncongenial experience had much in common with Kleist's, so the following years of restless, uncertain wandering bear the same character as Kleist's years of tribulation. Aware that life demands active and wholesome participation in its affairs, Chamisso stumbled blindly on through the mysteries of speculative thought, wended his erratic way through problematical poetry, until with sudden determination he turned to science for that which should put solid substance into his life. In the midst of this new and rational effort came the great national uprising of the German people. Chamisso was regarded with suspicion and very naturally made to suffer in his intercourse with his adopted countrymen because of his professed sympathy for the worn and ragged French soldiery straggling homeward from Russia, through Germany. So pronounced was this feeling of resentment against him, that his best friends deemed it advisable to send him into rural retreat. At Kunersdorf, as tutor to the children of a wealthy family, he conceived and wrote his world-famed fable : *Peter Schlemihl*, the story of the man without a shadow.

The many varied interpretations put upon this first successful tale from the pen of Chamisso, alone make one suspicious of its final value as a work of art. Like Goethe's *Faust II*, it has taken its place among the great works of poetic literature, but hardly of poetry proper.

In its motive and main outlines the story as told by Chamisso,

was purely subjective. Its theme deals with the tragedy of social isolation and the problem of ethic manhood deprived of its moral expression. At the moment the story was conceived, the old passionate longing of Chamisso to exert some definite influence upon his generation and to feel the assurance that his own character was a moral force in German life, reasserted itself. This longing was intensified by his immediate experience and by the futile effort to identify himself with German ways, thought, and feeling. For there can be no doubt that Chamisso wished with all his heart to be accounted a German among Germans, but with this reservation: he desired to preserve the peculiar inheritance of his birth. When he left the Prussian army, he wrote to his friend Varnhagen: "Whither my career has led me, there I leave behind no poor reputation. My desire is for France, there for a space to hide myself until again I may appear among you. For I am a German at heart, though forsooth a *free* German, and shall ever so remain." Imbued with all the instincts of a Frenchman, he yet strove for full membership in the race-family into which he had been adopted. France, the home of his youth, supplied the first precious impressions of childhood. It was for Chamisso what Italy had been for Goethe. As a glorified ideal, the land of his birth constantly hovered near the border of his consciousness: —

Ich träume als Kind mich zurücke,
Und schüttle mein greises Haupt;
Wie sucht ihr mich heim, ihr Bilder,
Die lang ich vergessen geglaubt?¹

Thus he phrased this ever present semiconscious remembrance of youthful surroundings in the opening stanza of *Castle Boncourt*. As the poem proceeds to fix these dreamlike impressions, one is irresistibly reminded of Mignon's song in Goethe's *William Meister*. But it is significant that the unconscious

¹ Back into childhood I dream me,
Shaking my hoary head:
Memories, why do ye haunt me,
Long thought forgotten and dead?

longing of the poet did not, as in Goethe's poem, rise to conscious expression with the vivification of youthful memories. The reality of the past remained for Chamisso a mere past, — something that could not again enter his life and to which he could not return : —

So stehst du, o Schloss meiner Väter,
 Mir treu und fest in dem Sinn,
 Und bist von der Erde verschwunden,
 Der Pflug geht über dich hin.¹

The poem was written nearly fifteen years later than *Peter Schlemihl*, but in essentially the same spirit, though with that touch of sublime resignation to which Chamisso had fought his way : —

Sei fruchtbar, o teurer Boden,
 Ich segne dich mild und gerührt,
 Und segn' ihn zwiefach, wer immer
 Den Pflug nun über dich führt.²

It closes with a popular strain, taken from Eichendorff's *Broken Ringlet*, a strain indicative of the loneliness that pursued Chamisso through life, and that found in his own world-wanderings, subsequent to the writing of *Peter Schlemihl*, its actual counterpart : —

Ich aber will auf mich raffen,
 Mein Saitenspiel in der Hand,
 Die Weiten der Welt durchschweifen,
 Und singen von Land zu Land.³

¹ Castle, thou home of my fathers,
 Plain to my vision and bright,
 Crumbled to dust though thy towers,
 Furrowed by ploughs though thy site.

² Fruitful, dear soil, be thou ever,
 Tenderly bless I thee now,
 Doubly I bless him who guideth
 Over thy bosom his plough.

³ But I, ever onward I hie me,
 Clasp my harp in my hand,
 Wand'ring from country to country,
 Singing from land to land.

Appropriately, therefore, this particular poem was first published in connection with a second edition of *Schlemihl*. It was inevitable that Chamisso's soul should fail to vibrate in harmony with the atmosphere in which he grew to manhood. With sincerest love for the soil into which he had been transplanted, it was impossible for him to feel the vital touch of ideals then active in German life. He had no living sense for the subtle complexion of this life, none for the patriotic conceptions of national freedom and unity, spiritual homogeneity, and racial brotherhood.

In this loneliness Chamisso came to insist upon the inalienable rights of individuality and the absolutism of character, not as it appears to others, but as each man estimates his own. He drew a sharp cleavage between the intelligible character — to use Kant's terms — and the empirical. In the conviction of his own worth, he disdained, or at least failed to make, those concessions which alone could give this worth empiric reality. Utterly inconsiderate in his frankness, determined to do and act in exact accord with his sentiments and convictions, he was forced to realize that the appearance of character, *i.e.* the estimate in which it is held by associates, is after all a reality, and that the responsibility for the nature of this reality rests with the individual. Bitter experience taught him that "being" and "seeming" cannot be separated without tragic results. Private character must find its complement in public character, and to this end, private sympathies agree with public sympathies. Then, and then only, can a man cast a "true shadow." Out of these personal experiences *Schlemihl* was conceived.

The realism of the story as told by Chamisso constitutes one of its chief charms. It was the tale of his own life, but narrated in a way that gave it general human significance. The accidental causes that so largely contributed to the isolation of the author were wholly disregarded, and the motivation of the shadow-loss was sought in human frailty: desire for personal gain and ignorant disregard of appearances. Upon this foundation Chamisso builded his structure of psychological analysis, with a logical consistency that forces the imagination to accept

its allegorical phrasing. With this psychological realism Chamisso coupled present-day realities. Drawing heavily on popular superstitions, usually presumed to be available only in connection with descriptions dealing with bygone times, he boldly gave to the action of the story the setting of contemporary German life. Through his own love for these externalities he succeeded in making this setting convincingly true. Psychology and empiric realism were furthermore merged in one through the force of the poet's own experience. For the experiences of Schlemihl with the present-day life of the story were but reflexes of the emotions aroused in Chamisso by contemporary events.

The artistic weakness of *Peter Schlemihl* lies wholly in its failure to set forth clearly the precise human significance of the "shadow." One may prove ever so clearly the intentions of the poet; but the fact that his full meaning has to be gathered from sources that lie outside the pages of his tale, is sufficient to establish the inadequacy of the story as a work of art. This is the penalty paid by the poet whose ideal springs from a negative attitude toward life.

Friedrich Hölderlin is not, strictly speaking, to be counted among nineteenth-century poets. His *Hyperion* and *Empedocles* belong chronologically to the eighteenth century, and his final mental breakdown in 1807 stopped literary activity within the period under discussion. None the less, his poetic productions were so closely related in spirit to those of the nineteenth-century poets of negation, that they cannot be wholly disregarded in this connection.

Hölderlin was one of those inordinately sensitive natures that feel every reverse like the cutting lash of a scourge; one of those men in whom the artistic sense of harmony was keyed to its highest pitch. Had his social environments been suggestive of large ideals, capable of appealing to his constructive imagination, he might never have lost himself so utterly in the maze of revolutionary opposition. One is entitled to draw this conclusion from the intensity of his positive constructions of the physical universe. For his appreciation of nature not merely

encompassed phenomena of the most varied description, it also grasped the unitary idea of nature, the sublime oneness in its variety. He loved nature, since he saw it not as a body of mere physical facts, nor as an impersonal reality, but as a sentient organism pulsing with life. And yet the limitation and repression of its individual life-forms left no tragic impression on his consciousness; rather suggested and sustained the idea of cosmic unity in which individual forms attain the final consummation of their true essence. Pity that human society should have failed to speak to Hölderlin's poetic consciousness with the same suggestiveness!

The fault was not all Hölderlin's. What compensation had German life to offer for rebuffs which—though the common lot of human effort—came with the force of keenest personal disappointment to his highstrung temperament? None, so far as was then discernible. Hölderlin perceived only: government absolutism, bureaucratic supervision of individual destiny, conventional social forms barren of all ideal meaning, prosaic philistinism of the bourgeoisie, pretentious pedantry in the academic world, pettiest provincialism in national affairs! In the face of such conditions, it is not surprising that Hölderlin spun his soul's longing with each year more completely in the chrysalis of personal isolation, and within this chrysalis matured the frail butterfly of his poetry. It fluttered forth, beautiful in its strange, exotic colorings and ethereal grace, but an alien to the life into which it was born. The visions of his solitary dream-life were dearer to him than human associations. Hölderlin knew this and came to glory in it:—

Doch kannte ich euch besser,
 Als ich je die Menschen gekannt,
 Ich verstand die Stille des Aethers,
 Der Menschen Worte verstand ich nie.¹

¹ Yet always knew you better
 Than I ever knew human folk,
 Understanding the silence of Heaven,
 But never the speech of man.

The striving of Hölderlin was not titanic, much as he may so have considered it. For it never felt the impulse of that passionate volition which sets its goal beyond the humanly attainable and bends its every energy to satisfy one great, overweening ambition. Hölderlin dreamed of titanic things, and he dreamed of them in his writings; of the refutation of divine law and the possibility of a new world-order; of the transfiguration of the individual in the universal substance and the redemption of humanity through the passion for beauty; of the over-man who tears the bondage of false culture from the eyes of his fellow-men and reveals to them the glory of their supernal destiny. But he only dreamed of this. His Empedocles was a dreamer, the struggle of Empedocles was the conception of a dreamer, and the unfinished tragedy *Death of Empedocles* was itself a dream to be dreamed.

It was indeed an unavailing attempt for a man to essay dramatic poetry whose entire habit of thought and feeling had so little in common with current actualities. Lyric poetry was his proper sphere, and lyric poetry of that pensive type which sounds the sad note of a lonely soul.

What Hölderlin felt in successive moments of his solitary travail, he finally sought to sum up in epic story. The same desire for a compact poetic whole impelled him hereto that formed in later years the basic poetic motive of Heine's *Book of Songs*. But the story thus projected remained a lyric intonation of his personal desires. Nature has never been clothed by any German poet in raiment more superb than by Hölderlin in his *Hyperion*. The splendors of the empyrean by day and night; the ambient glory of the great sun; the grandeur of towering mountains and wide oceans; the quiet charm of gurgling spring and splashing rivulet; the wealth of form and color in wood and field; the dainty tenderness of the humblest flower; the vigor of self-creative and self-preserving life manifested through all the ceaseless changes of seasons and climates—they are all to be found in *Hyperion*. And yet—here too they seem like the passing of a dream. All this abounding life never rises beyond the stage of semi-consciousness. Human

significance it has, but only in so far as we realize in it the isolated subjectivity of the poet incarnate in nature. We can sympathize with all this beauty only as it is possible for us to sympathize with the intense exaltation of the poet, and though its passionate phrasing may fascinate us, we feel ourselves in the presence of that which is largely alien to our consciousness and moreover to our sympathies. Hölderlin's *Hyperion* does not satisfy otherwise than a dream may satisfy.

Fittingly the poet could write in the last pages of the book his fearful arraignment of Germany: "'Tis a harsh word, and yet I utter it, since 'tis true; I can imagine no people more disrupted than the Germans. Toilers you see, but no human beings; masters and servants, young men and staid, but no human beings—is it not for all the world like a battlefield where hands and arms and dismembered bodies lie mutilated in a confused mass, the while spent blood trickles away in the sands?"

A few years later Hölderlin retracted these words in part and sought to make amends in such poems as *To the Germans* and *Song of the Germans*. But he never learned to comprehend the genius of his people. For he had constructed his own ideal world out of an idealization of Greek antiquity. He came to suspect the presence of great constructive agencies in his generation; he never perceived their manifestation and could therefore never transform them into a poetic reality:—

Schon zu lange, zu lange, irr' ich dem Laien gleich
In des bildenden Geists werdender Werkstatt hier,
Nur was *blühet*, erkenn' ich,
Was er *sinnet*, erkenn' ich nicht.¹

It is true that in his solitary broodings, Hölderlin formulated ideas of social intercourse not unlike those later so prominent in the nineteenth century. As a Suabian he inherited a strong

¹ Yea, too long, e'en too long now, roam I a layman still
Through the spirit creative's form-giving workshop here,
Forms completed discerning,
Forms it broodeth, discern I not.

— *An die Deutschen*. Second version.

bias for democratic forms of government ; but his republicanism was a mere ideal abstraction. Its source was not in empiric reality. For Hölderlin did not formulate his ideal as the result of any recognition of the faculty or desire of the German demos for self-government, as did Uhland. He stood in conscious opposition to mass-ideals. The German populace was in his eyes a vulgar crowd, incapable of cherishing thoughts that make for higher forms of living. Even those phases of his philosophy which seemed to have closest relation to empiric life, only served to alienate him the more, and could not attain artistic reality in his works. At best they led to more or less incisive and passionate reflections.

At this point the ways of Chamisso and Hölderlin part. Chamisso's appreciation of actualities embraced more than natural phenomena. Civic and social conditions found in him a sympathetic observer during the years of reaction when the problem of national freedom and unity lost its prime importance. Here his intimacy with French thought stood him in good stead. He became in these later years of his life a sturdy champion of civic freedom, *i.e.* of a constitutional form of government in which monarchical absolutism was to be qualified and limited through a coördinate representative body chosen by the people. He was also one of the first to recognize, through translations from the French and in independent productions, poetic elements in the lowly life of the proletariat and tragic motives peculiar to this life as such.

The ballads of Chamisso were not free from political tendencies, as were those of Uhland, his contemporary. Through most of his narrative poems there runs a didactic refrain. Schiller's definition of naïve poetry applies in the main to Uhland's ballads ; Chamisso's fall within Schiller's category of sentimental poetry. Uhland's poems were essentially spontaneous, fixing visions that sprang from a full poetic consciousness of the living reality of their motives ; those of Chamisso were in the last analysis reflective, phrasing motives that personal sympathy for particular human suffering and frailty caused him to conceive as mak-

ing for a possible better organization of society. Chamisso's ballads rested upon rational analysis. They were for that reason not less human, but less poetic. One need only compare his *German Folk Legends* with Uhland's ballads, to become convinced of this difference in the works of the two poets. The last poem of Chamisso's cycle of folk-ballads, *The Women of Winsperg*, may serve to indicate the reflective quality of the entire cycle. Here Chamisso closes with these lines:—

So war das Gold der Krone wohl rein und unentweiht,
Die Sage schallt herüber aus unvergessner Zeit.
Im Jahr elfhundertvierzig, wie ich verzeichnet fand,
Galt Königswort noch heilig im Deutschen Vaterland.¹

This particular ballad contrasted the ideal which the populace would like to see realized in dynastic circles with the faithlessness of German princes who refused to grant constitutional reforms solemnly promised in the days of the popular uprising against the French. Chamisso found himself in a period of troubled transition, which forced him, with his realistic temper, to search for the causes of its restlessness. The lines of the ballad *Tempest*—

Ich bin auf Burgeszinnen
Nicht König mit Schwert und Kron,
Ich bin der empörten Zeiten
Unmächtiger, bangender Sohn,²

were written not merely out of sterling sympathy for King Frederick William of Prussia and his impotent desire to meet the problems of civic life, but also out of conscious inability to read clearly in the blurred pages of contemporary history. Civic emancipation of the masses inspired the imagination of

¹ Thus was the royal purple full pure and undefiled, —
Those times are unforgotten, the legend unbeguiled.
In the year eleven forty, as I would have you know,
Kings deemed a promise sacred in Germany, I trow.

² Not King on turreted castle
Am I with my sword and crown,
But an impotent, tremulous creature,
Aghast at its time's angry frown,

the poet. But this emancipation did not appear to him as the necessary evolution of the organic life of his people, but as a remedy for undefined revolutionary unrest. It was essentially an academic conception.

Chamisso lived too intently in the immediate present to escape its distracting influences. Accidental phases of life, — phases that happened to manifest themselves at that time in consequence of Bourbon short-sightedness, impressed him all too forcibly. These surface conditions and their immediate significance made it difficult for Chamisso to shape the permanent human significance of single phenomena in visions of convincing beauty. His poems of social life, to which his translations of Béranger finally led him, sounded a magnificent note of broadest and deepest human sympathy, and never fail to awaken a responsive echo in the reader's heart. But it is always for a particular instance, an isolated case. The loving care devoted to every detail of local coloring, the realism of the moment, banishes from our consciousness the symbolic significance of his themes. Chamisso fails to convince us that he is portraying truths which transcend the incidental. His is the realism of the observer, not of the participator in the life depicted; and this stamp is impressed upon the best of these poems, *The Old Washerwoman* and *The Beggar and His Dog*. Uhland wrote as one standing in the life of which he sang, and his realism, *e.g.* in the ballad *The Mowing Girl*, carries the conviction of larger truths.

The works of Hölderlin, Chamisso, and Uhland, respectively, stand for three distinct, yet correlated, phases of poetic activity in Germany during the nineteenth century. Hölderlin's poetry was the type of those purely subjective creations which had their source in personal humiliation and disappointment. Spurning the life which this personal suffering distorted, his imagination constructed a poetic reality dissociated from common experiences. Uhland's best poems, largely ballads, sprang from that inner harmony between the poetic ego and its objective environment in which the best poets of the century recognized the ultimate source of artistic productivity.

Between these two extremes Chamisso takes his appropriate place. He had neither the abhorrence of Hölderlin for human, *i.e.* German, sluggishness nor Uhland's innate sense of the sublime potentialities of the race. Standing outside of the life of his times like Hölderlin, he yet strove to be of it like Uhland, and to reveal in poetic form its great sorrows. No poet of these first decades, unless it be Kleist in his transition period, so boldly laid bare the psychology of human phenomena. The psychological realism of Chamisso's ballads — *Salas y Gomez, Mateo Falcone, Don Juanito, The Crucifix* — has hardly been surpassed by modern naturalism. In his keen sympathy for every possible form of individual suffering, Chamisso unwittingly laid his poetry of this genre open to the criticism that he himself passed upon the sculptor in his *Crucifix*. His relentless exposure of human agony comes perilously near to the action of this sculptor when he nails to the cross a young apprentice that he may catch in the features of the dying youth the expression of agony for his crucified Christ: —

Der erste Nagel fasst; es schallt ein Schrei.
 Er trifft kein Ohr, kein Herz; das Auge wacht
 Allein und forscht, was Schmerzensausdruck sei.
 Und hastig wird das Grässliche vollbracht,
 Und schnell das blut'ge Vorbild aufgestellt;
 Er schreitet nun zur Arbeit mit Bedacht.
 Von grauser Freude wird sein Blick erhellt,
 Wie der Natur er jetzt es abgewonnen,
 Wie sich im Schmerz ein schöner Leib verhält.
 Die Hand schafft unablässig und besonnen,
 Das Herz ist allem Menschlichen verdorrt.

It was not given to Chamisso to be drawn wholly from his poetic isolation by a great popular movement into the warm embrace of collective life. His poems mark the transition from isolation to that poetic harmony with the manifestations of life wherein Kleist's muse attained emancipation. Through this transition stage most poets of the nineteenth century were forced to pass before they could reach the full stature of their artistic growth. Many never absolved this tutelage, many barely entered thereon and like Hölderlin wore away their lives in

pursuit of impossible ideals. But of all it can truthfully be said — and this is the peculiar glory of their striving — that a burning desire to elevate life, to make poetry an active force in the regeneration of mankind and not merely the purveyor of pleasure and flitting happiness, inspired their activity. German poetry of the nineteenth century rested on an ethical interpretation of art.

Two poets remain to be considered as forerunners of the great poets of negation. Their genius, however, was forced from an original high estate into lower forms of poetic activity: August von Platen and Ferdinand Raimund.

Platen began his poetic career where Chamisso ended his. But his development was a retrograde movement. He faced life with the ardent desire to find therein motives of sterling worth and poetic significance. His earliest collection of poems, *Gaselen*, pessimistic though it was as regards the possibility of individual happiness, gave voice to this fundamental desire, —

Lasst eurer Liebe nichts entgehen, entschlüpfen eurer Kunde nichts!¹

or

Und es öffnet gegen Alle sich das Herz in reiner Liebe,
Und ich will so gern mit Allen dieses Lebens Bann ertragen.²

But German political, civic, and social life under the pall of Metternich's régime stunted his ability to satisfy this desire. He became a "man without a shadow," retired from active participation in affairs of life, and fled for years from the country of his birth to sojourn in Italy. Irritated by the discrepancy between his early ideal and that which he now was, he took a further step backward into the loneliness characteristic of Hölderlin. This final isolation, though of the same type, was not the same in kind as Hölderlin's. For Platen never turned his back so completely on the present. Detesting the ways of the world, he clung to its approbation. Genuine, sterling

¹ Let naught escape your love, and naught elude your ken.

² And my heart toward all is opened with a pure and honest love,
And with all I would so gladly bear the burden of this life.

ambition for recognition of progressive citizenship, which at first he shared with Chamisso, was perverted into ambitious striving for fame. To be sure, he wrote : —

Mir, der ich blos ein wandernder Rhapsode,
Genügt ein Freund, ein Becher Wein im Schatten,
Und ein berühmter Name nach dem Tode !¹

But the lines were disingenuous. Platen was not content with the approval of some intimate friend ; quiet musings in solitude were not to his taste ; and posthumous fame had no charm for him unless it could also be contemporaneous. Thus he came to pose, seeking to make the world believe that he was the victim of its perversity : —

Es sei gesegnet, wer die Welt verachtet ;
Denn falscher ist sie als es Worte malen ;
Sie sammelt grausam unsren Schmerz in Schalen
Und reicht zum Trunk sie, wenn wir halb verschmachtet.

Mir, den als Werkzeug immer sie betrachtet,
Mir presst Gesang sie aus mit tausend Qualen,
Lässt ihn vielleicht durch ferne Zeiten strahlen,
Ich aber werd' als Opfertier geschlachtet.

Und ihr, die ihr beneidetet mein Leben,
Und meinen glücklichen Beruf erhobet,
Wie könnt in Irrtum ihr so lange schweben ?

Hätt' ich nicht jedes Gift der Welt erprobet,
Wie hätt' ich ganz dem Himmel mich ergeben,
Und wie vollendet, was ihr liebt und lobet ?²

¹ And I, a simple wandering trouvère,
Crave but a friend, a cooling glass of wine,
And after death an honored name and fair.

² Those bless I who regard the world as naught ;
For words may picture not her falsity ;
To parched lips she presses gleefully
The cup in which our bitter woes are caught.

As tool she treats me, forces me distraught
To put in song my untold agony,
And though the song shine in posterity,
Her victim to the altar she has brought.

Platen had not that superb conception of the cosmos in which the irritation of Hölderlin was purged of its selfish motives and assumed the character of a vicarious suffering for humanity. Convinced of the redemptive mission of poetry, and placing his art far above temporal gain, Platen never yielded an iota to popular acclaim in matters artistic. Yet he never realized the true character of the redeeming force of poetry. He criticised, remonstrated, accused, vituperated, sermonized, often with a just estimate. He never created that which by the strength of its own inherent beauty was capable of supplanting the unworthy. Flattering himself with the thought of being a German Aristophanes, he parodied in *The Fatal Fork* and *Romantic Ædipus* conditions of German life that made spook-tragedies possible and popular, and vented his biting sarcasm on the poetasters of the day. In his bitter opposition to all poetic endeavor that ran counter to particular views of his own, he even attacked his betters, Immermann and Heine. And yet, sincere as he was beyond question, he failed of his great ambition because his satire was directed against false forms of life not as conditions traversing organic progress, but as conditions ignoring or crossing his private volition.

The poetic technique of Platen met every canon of conventional literary criticism and created withal only artificial, rarely artistic, beauty. He seems to have suffered atrophy of the poetic instinct. To linguistic adroitness, metric perfection, and purity of rhyme he pinned his faith. Form and content were not treated as a poetic unit spontaneously produced by the poetic imagination under the pressure of spiritual experience and only refined in its external appearance by technical skill. In the technique of his art, Platen had no peer among contemporaries, Rückert and possibly Heine excepted; yet the

And you who envy me life's even flow,
 My happy calling to the heavens raise,
 How can you harbor such an error now?

Had I not proved the world's envenomed ways,
 How could to Heaven's will I calmly bow?
 And how perform what you so love and praise?

separation of form and content robbed his verse of all melodious quality. His language could not simulate the expression of genuine lyric effects, nor produce the effect of genuine poetic visions. Now and again in earlier poems, as in *The Grave in the Busento*, or in a few lyrics, he proved that the gift of true poesie slumbered in his bosom, waiting only for the trumpet-call of a people marching to freedom in the consciousness of its civic worth. But Platen never heard this call. He looked for the moment: —

Wenn deiner Söhne jeglicher
Sein Bürgertum erkennt.¹

He never experienced its inspiration.

Ferdinand Raimund's poetry may be compared with Platen's only in so far as it shows a similar retrograde development. Its natural source was the intimate association of the poet with the life of which he sang. But Raimund was not content to draw from this source alone. He was a man of the people and a poet of the people, like Uhland, but in a more restricted sense. His instincts were all derived from that lowly estate to which caste-prejudices of the Old World assigned no future and a very insignificant present. Uhland represented a body politic, Raimund a social class.

As the son of a shoemaker, moreover of a Viennese shoemaker, Raimund belonged by birth to a class noted for its social isolation, but no less for its social compactness: the proletariat of Vienna. From this his genius drew its best inspiration and in this sphere fulfilled a truly poetic mission. Raimund was in fact the first poet of the nineteenth century to idealize naïvely a form of living which the polite society of the Austrian capital regarded somewhat as we do our city slums. In visions — for they were such — of distinct dramatic value he formulated his conceptions, or if one so wishes, his philosophy of life, out of the full consciousness of his own social environment. In this he differed from Chamisso, who

¹ When of your sons each single one
Discerns his civic rights.

treated related forms of the social order as an outsider and an observer. Raimund's poetry was therefore, on the whole, a spontaneous reflexion of proletariat-ideals and popular in the best sense. It invested with conscious reality the semiconscious longing of the humblest for recognition of their human dignity.

After disheartening early reverses, Raimund finally secured an engagement at the Leopoldstädter theatre, the popular playhouse of the lower classes of Vienna. Here he established his reputation as an actor. *Hanswurstiades*, Merry-Andrew plays often in the form of harlequinades, flourished there side by side with extravaganzas in which magic and the fairy world ruled supreme. The pathos in the popular admiration of Bäuerle's superficial farces and Perinet's spectacular vagaries did not escape Raimund. His own assignments he raised more nearly to the level of character sketches fraught with a deeper meaning and ennobled by more direct human significance. His impersonations responded to the secret longing which impelled his audiences to seek refuge from the listless monotony of dreary commonplace in self-ridicule and fanciful illusions. Some subtle instinct seemed to tell him that laughter at their own social follies raised the laughers above their flattened sphere. He suspected that the crude poetic justice and the extravagant possibilities of the fairy dramas appealed to fundamental human aspirations which may be dwarfed but never eradicated by temporal conditions.

Raimund's first drama, *The Barometer-maker on the Magic Isle*, written in 1823, was in the main a combination of the two genres in which the actor had won success: the Merry-Andrew plays and the magic extravaganzas. Quicksilver, a tramp barometer-maker, cast away on a magic island, receives from fairy hands three gifts. In his ignorance of the wiles of society, he is quickly cajoled out of their possession, but finally manages to regain them through mother-wit and the assistance of a maid-in-waiting.

Apparently the drama was a mere farce catering to the tastes of the audiences to which Raimund had been playing for ten years. Around the ludicrous fortunes of Quicksilver, the Merry

Andrew in the play, all interest centred, and the fairy world with its magic paraphernalia was hardly more than the traditional mechanical device. Unwittingly, however, the trait that had raised the acting of Raimund above mere buffoonery gave character to this first play. At the close of the piece, Quicksilver is the jolly good fellow that he was at the beginning ; but the *bon enfant* has learned worldly wisdom, not merely of the kind that copes successfully with the intrigues of polite society, but of the kind that recognizes the pretentious shallowness of this society and scoffs at its would-be superiority.

The circumstances that led to this first appearance of Raimund as a playwright were largely accidental. The prolific Meisl was prevented by illness from writing the promised benefit play for Raimund, and the actor was put to it to write his own piece. This first venture served, however, to make Raimund conscious of his poetic gift. It gave him confidence to create plays in which the human significance he had put into his acting should speak not merely through the fortunes of a Merry Andrew in disguise, or through suggestive impersonations of one character of the play, but through the whole action of the play itself. With each successive drama, burlesque became less essential and the fairy world more intimately interwoven with human aspirations.

Step by step one may trace this ennobling of the popular farce, until it rose to the dignity of dramatic poetry. A comparison of the canine attachment of Florian in *The Diamond of the Spirit-king* with the sterling human faithfulness of Valentine in *The Spendthrift* shows the lines along which Raimund developed the burlesque element. *The Alp-king and the Misanthropist*, and *The Maiden from the Fairy-world or the Peasant as Millionnaire* produced in the characters of Wurzel and Rappelkopf (Rattlehead), realistic portrayals of caste-psychology. Edward in *The Diamond of the Spirit-king*, and Flottwell in *The Spendthrift*, indicated that the dramatist was attempting to find the same psychological truths in all circles of society. In Raimund's third drama, *The Alp-king and the Misanthropist*, the fairy world acquired full anthropomorphic significance and

stood thenceforth in his folk-plays for a glorified work-a-day life. No longer employed for spectacular effects or as a device to stimulate momentarily the imagination, it fulfilled again, with signal dramatic force, its primitive office : the embodiment of poetic ideas of minds unsophisticated, in allegory of simple directness.

One of the greatest charms of these folk-plays is the naiveness with which great moral truths are allegorically set forth. Truth rules here as an imperial fact, which needs neither argument nor explanation. Few scenes of dramatic literature are more impressive than the one in which the peasant-millionnaire, having lost all sense of social obligations, is confronted by Old Age, changed into senile decrepitude, and returns to his home with the cry : "Ashes ! Ashes !" Nor has dramatic realism often been more convincing than in the redemption-scenes of *Rappelkopf*, the misanthropist, who exchanges personal appearances with *Astrologus*, the fairy king of the Alps, and is forced to see himself with the eyes of another. Seldom, likewise, has the vanity of riches been presented with such thrilling effect as in the confronting of the spendthrift *Flottwell* with the allegorical figure of his beggared fiftieth year and this figure's recurring refrain : —

Mein Herz ist stets des Kammers Beute,
Durch eigne Schuld bin ich gekränkt.¹

And finally, the permanent significance of human life and the divine possibilities of the human soul under the transient limitations of human frailties and follies, have not in many dramas so quickened the unseen with the reality of the seen as in this last of *Raimund's* plays. The hypostatic union of *Flottwell* and the fairy *Cheristane* brings the old *Undine* myth into moral touch with modern life.

And yet, paradoxical as it may seem in the face of this actual poetic growth, the poetic ambition of *Raimund* was deciduous. To reach out beyond his natural environment and seek to make

¹ My heart is e'er the prey of sorrow,
My own guilt has confounded me.

his dramas represent other phases of life than a mere class segregated by social prejudices and precluded from self-conscious participation in the reformation of society, was surely a worthy ambition. But it distorted the poetic perspective of many of Raimund's dramas and at times deprived his work of that self-sufficiency which was its chief glory when he spoke for his own circles. His attempts to shift the dramatic conflict into a domain where he himself was a comparative stranger, were always futile, sometimes abortive. To do this was his great ambition; the failure to accomplish it his great despair, with suicide trailing after.

But shall one hold Metternich's régime responsible for Raimund's limited poetic power? Shall one assert that rejection of the principle of legitimacy, adoption of representative government, and equalization of civic rights among all classes of the people would have endowed Raimund with the power to create characters of high life, to portray dramatically the true nature of this life, or to shape academic ideals in forms as artistic as conceptions of spontaneous growth? Not that, but this: the field of his vision would have been more adequate to his poetic ambition, and the power of artistic expression would not have vented itself upon themes beyond his own horizon.

Austria had not participated as had North Germany in the national uprising. Its people had not felt the warm breath of the generous spirit of mutual dependence. It had stood apart, a political unit, self-centred and self-sufficient. It had passed through its own peculiar tribulations, but in doing so it remained outside the range of that great popular movement which aroused in the lowliest German some sense of self-respect, of personal power, and of racial affinity. The ideal of national political freedom through national political unity had not in Austria filtered down through the classes, carrying with it the germs of a new ideal: civic dignity of the individual. It was Austria that brought forth a Metternich to foist his Bourbonism upon the German world. And this was possible only because Austrian civic consciousness still slumbered in a deep sleep. The curse of Metternich's régime lay in the systematic stunting of

this consciousness, in the consequent distortion of natural human aspirations into unnatural ambitions, in the gratification of vanity rather than in sturdy self-respect. And so, indirectly at least, Bourbonism was responsible, not for any insufficiency of Raimund's poetic ability, but for his misplaced ambition, and for the inadequacy of those dramatic creations in which he attempted to gratify this ambition. It deprived the bourgeoisie, the great class to which Raimund belonged, of all incentive to self-culture, of nearly all opportunities for asserting its manhood, of the very essentials of self-respect. It, therefore, set before Raimund a false ideal. For it caused him to feel that he was writing for an inferior social body, that his poetry, so far as it rooted only in this soil, was not poetry of the highest order, and that to attain classic distinction he must also sing of and sing for the aristocracy of culture. Had Raimund lived in an age of progress rather than an age of reaction, had he been able to feel the upward lift of the working classes, he could not thus have treated the life from which alone came his inspiration and in depicting which his poetic power was sovereign.

CHAPTER VI

THE ERA OF PESSIMISM

THE GREAT POETS OF ISOLATION. THE TRAGEDY OF THEIR LIVES AND THE TRAGEDY OF THEIR WORKS

GRILLPARZER, LENAU, GRABBE

Man sagt, dass, wer sich selbst geschaut im Leben,
Die eigene Gestalt, ansichtig, ausser sich,
Dass der nicht leben könne fürder mehr,
Und müsse sterben in der nächsten Frist,
O unglücksel'ge Frucht der Selbstbeschauung!
Du hast dich auch geschaut und bist gestorben:
Denn das nicht was er *ist*, nein was er *thut*,
Das soll der Mensch erkennen und erwägen,
Sonst ist er tot, sei's auch, dass er noch athme!
Die ew'gen Geister *schauen* und sind *heilig*,
Der Mensch soll aber *handeln* und sei *gut*.¹

Thus Franz Grillparzer, Austria's greatest poet, in his threnody on Zacharias Werner. And yet this poem was nothing if not introspective! In it Grillparzer contemplated his own peculiar affinity to Werner. It was a flagellation of that poetic self to which Grillparzer clung with every fibre of his being. He too was unable to find "life's eternal centre of gravity."

¹ 'Tis said whoe'er himself in life hath seen
His own form visibly descried outside himself,
That such an one may not thereafter live,
But meeteth death, his momentary doom.
O baneful curse of self beholding self!
Thou too beheld'st thyself and thou didst die:
For never what he is, no, what he doeth,
That shall a man discern and cogitate:
Else were he dead e'en though he breathe in body,
Th' eternal ones behold and they are holy.
Man's province is the deed, let him be good!

Nachruf an Zacharias Werner (1823), 2d stanza.

He too felt the curse of his isolation. His poetry also partook of the character of self-immolation. How sadly true of Grillparzer were the lines of the same poem: —

Du, Armer, hast die Ruhe nie gekannt,
Dein Streben nahm sie dir, und strebtest doch um Ruhe! ¹

Personal experience evoked in Grillparzer this warm sympathy for men whose souls thirsted for harmony, and who, finding no refreshing draught in the dreary desert of life, sought to quench this thirst with their hearts' blood. He too belonged to the lonely ones who walk apart by themselves, having faced the dark tragedy of mortal insufficiency in the conflict with stern reality.

Grillparzer was the contemporary of Raimund. His father was a noted jurist of Vienna. By birth Grillparzer was, therefore, a member of one of those social circles to which Raimund looked up as the arbiters of culture. Yet the poetic development of Grillparzer was, if anything, made more problematical by his birth. Raimund, at least, was capable of sympathizing with his equals. Grillparzer had not this sympathy for his own class. It was his peculiar misfortune to think after the manner of their thinking, but not to feel after the manner of their feeling. As a man he participated in their prejudices; as a poet he wandered in realms where these prejudices had no justifiable existence. Inherited temperament inclined him to sentimental isolation, home-training sent him on his lonely way, and society confirmed him in his solitude.

It is told of Grillparzer that he replied to a certain criticism which Raimund made of Goethe with the disdainful remark, "That is beyond you!" There spoke Grillparzer, the man of class-prejudices. But it was also Grillparzer who recorded in *The Poor Musician* his appreciation of the proletariat when, on occasions of folk-festivities, "men as a mass forget for the nonce individual aims and feel themselves as a part of the whole, in which, after all, the divine element is to be found."

¹ Poor fellow, peace thou knewest never;
Thy striving baffled peace, its constant goal!

This discord between his rational and his poetic consciousness left its imprint on all Grillparzer's works. It gave to his earliest poems their elegiac character, and as he advanced in years and grew more and more conscious of its nature, it transformed elegy into tragedy and made his dramas the index of his own bitter conflict. In these dramas he laid bare his own heart, so much so that he persistently refused to attend any performance of his own plays, and even withheld his last dramatic writings from the public.

The schism between the purely intellectual and the artistic in Grillparzer's consciousness, is perhaps best characterized in his own words. Speaking of his vacillating affections for women, he once made the remark: "The instant that the participating object no longer fitted to a hair into the contours which at my first approach I had drawn of it, that instant my feelings rejected it as something alien with such force that all my efforts to maintain at least some interest therein were wasted. . . . It seems to me that in the object of my affection I loved only the image which my fancy created thereof, inasmuch as the actual had been transformed into an artistic reality and fascinated me by its agreement with my ideas, but at the least discrepancy only repelled me the more vehemently." Grillparzer was constantly being disillusioned, and herein he came to recognize the "Faustian" motive of his own life.

However much, at first blush, the poetic activity of Grillparzer may seem to resemble that of Hölderlin, there was, in the poetic conceiving of the two men, this important difference: Hölderlin straightway sought to fix the idealized image in poetic form; Grillparzer was not moved to poetic conceiving until this ideal image had been compared with its original. His poetic consciousness dealt therefore with a perpetual duality and consistently externalized itself in forms dramatic with lyric colorings. Disillusionment was the source and theme of his poetry. (For this reason he so often reiterated his passionate wail for "Sammlung," *i.e.* for that state of calm composure which permits the just poetic balancing of the real and the ideal. When Grillparzer felt the need of expressing

his idealizations at first hand, he resorted to music, and at such moments, extemporizing perchance with an old etching placed before him, he was most like Hölderlin.

It is of course evident that a temperament of this kind can escape hypochondria only by coming in touch with one of those magnificent outbursts of public spirit that by the force of their ideal possibilities snatch the brooding individual from his isolation, and put their objective ideal in the place of his subjective idealization. Austrian life, as has been said, had no such stimulus to offer. Its organization rather intensified the morbidness of Grillparzer. It is true that the principles on which Austrian society was based, absolutism and caste, were not in the abstract uncongenial to Grillparzer. It is likewise true that he gloried in the political isolation of Austria. But apart from the fact that Grillparzer was thereby shut out from participating in the great movement of the century as it had set in in other German states, he was constantly distressed by the practical consequences of these principles and this isolation. Judged by ethical standards these consequences were trifles, but in the moral atmosphere wherein Grillparzer moved, they wounded his sensibilities to the quick. Indeed, they were in the main responsible for the sullen withdrawal of Grillparzer from active life. They rankled so deep in his heart that for the rest of his days he kept to his hermit ways, unheeding the world and well-nigh forgotten by it.

One need not read Grillparzer's writings with any particular care, especially those published posthumously, to perceive how much he was irritated by press-censorship, by indignities encountered in his official career, and by the disdainful attitude of German critics. Had Grillparzer been less a supporter of government absolutism, he might have risen superior to the chicaneries of the censor as so many young men of German states to the north came to scoff at the fetters imposed upon freedom of thought and speech. Had he been more open-minded in his views of gentility in a private career, and less given to that exaggerated estimate of officialdom which goes with caste, he might have exchanged his official station for a

private occupation less mortifying to his self-respect. Had not prejudices of political particularism caused him to publish his poems and dramas in Vienna, he might have reached the greater German public through the presses of Cotta and satisfied his secret ambition.

Experiences of this kind do not explain the final source of Grillparzer's artistic temper, nor is it intended that they should. But taken in connection with sad experiences within his narrower family circle and with frequent physical suffering, they were prominent factors in determining the character of his poetic life and its literary expression. For they confirmed his youthful tendency to fashion fanciful worlds which the experiences of every day rudely destroyed. Through this process his artistic sensibilities were quickened and forced into poetic phrasing. Grillparzer's poetry is noted for its impassioned affirmation of the insufficiency of human life, and the story of his poetic life is summed up in that passionate exclamation : —

“O poetry, where art thou? And O land, where art thou, in which it flourishes, and in which it may be endured?”

Grillparzer's *Sappho* was the dithyrambic intonation of this discord in the poet's consciousness. A dramatic lyric of superb qualities, *Sappho* tells the story of Grillparzer's isolation. It was Grillparzer's soul which cried out in *Sappho* : —

Und ich! — O, ihr des Himmels Götter alle!
 Löscht aus in dieser Brust vergangner Leiden,
 Vergangner Freuden tiefgetretne Spur;
 Was ich gefühlt, gesagt, gethan, gelitten,
 Es sei nicht, selbst in der Erinn'ung nicht!
 Lasst mich zurückekehren in die Zeit,
 Da ich noch scheu mit runden Kinderwangen,
 Ein unbestimmt Gefühl im schweren Busen,
 Die neue Welt mit neuem Sinn betrat;
 Da Ahnung noch, kein quälendes Erkennen
 In meiner Leier goldnen Saiten spielte.¹

¹ And I! — Ye Gods, ye Gods of Heaven all,
 Wipe out the deep imprint that sorrow past,
 Past joys have stamped upon my soul!

Sappho was not Grillparzer's first drama, but it was the first that emanated from the full consciousness of disenchantment. It had been preceded by two dramatic poems: *Blanca of Castile* and *The Ancestress*, and by a considerable number of dramatic fragments and tentative dramatic conceptions. These marked the gradual transformation of a mere premonition of discord, — traceable in the elegiac poetry of his earlier years, — into a dramatic recognition of an eternal disparity between art and life. And in this development *The Ancestress* denoted the first step.

It would be a useless proceeding to enter here upon the wordy strife to which this drama has given rise. That the dramatic action revolves around a fatalistic conception of life, any disinterested reader must admit. But the drama is not to be classed with the spook-products of a Müllner. Its literary form should be sufficient to suggest to any critic the presence of poetic values. There was, in all conscience, sufficient spook-machinery in the play to make it a favorite with the same public that enjoyed the "creepy" nonentities of Müllner. But Müllner wrote merely to gratify a morbid public taste that had been whetted by Werner's *Twenty-fourth of February*. He was straining for effect. Spooks and fate were in his works mere superficial stage devices, the abortive progenies of the dramatic device of Schiller in the *The Bride of Messina*. Grillparzer's *Ancestress* was the fruit of moral perplexity in the presence of an inexplicable reality. The consciousness of his inability to be the sovereign self of his sentimental world was dawning on him. In this twilight, two worthless stories assumed poetic value. The drastic reality of a robber-tale supplied the

What I have felt, have said, have done, have suffered,
 It be no more, e'en not in memory !
 Let me return again to days gone by
 When timidly, with rosy cheeks of childhood,
 My bosom heaving with uncertain feeling,
 I stepped with vernal soul out in a vernal world ;
 When bodings dim, not harrowing cognition,
 Still played upon my lyre's golden strings.

— *Sappho*, Act I, 5.

body of his dramatic creation ; the weird illusion of a popular ghost story suggested the actions of this body ; but from the troubled depths of his own consciousness came the soul that actuated its manifestations. The drama was the overture to Grillparzer's later dramas. Its general motive was worked out in these along specific lines of human experience.

This dramatic development of Grillparzer's poetry was prefigured in the peculiar sympathy which he felt in earlier life for those characters of history and legend which stand out as examples of the fatal contrast between emotional thought and rational action. Throughout life it was preëminently this conflict that aroused his dramatic instinct. Scanning the long list of his dramatic fragments and tentative conceptions, one meets with names readily — and by Grillparzer certainly — associated with this tragic motive : Robert of Normania, Boleslav of Bohemia, Spartacus, Alfred the Great, the Medici, Faust, Brutus, Cræsus, Cassandra, Samson, Marius, Hannibal, and many others less familiar to the general reader. In these he saw the type of tragic heroism, and in his completed dramas from *Sappho* down to *The Jewess of Toledo*, this type prevailed. Of the fragmentary ventures antedating *Sappho*, none were completed in later years, though the undeveloped themes of many matured to dramatic reality in later works.

Life's Silhouette, the conception of which followed close on *Sappho*, was laid aside after the completion of the first act, to be taken up some ten years later, and brought to a finish with a new title, *A Dream is Life*. Here the metaphysical temper of Grillparzer manifested itself somewhat in the same way as that of Calderon in *Life is a Dream*. The dream, to be sure, is not by the Austrian poet asserted as a final reality ; in fact, the world of moral activity is ostensibly proclaimed as the realm of our natural being. But the dream-life of Grillparzer's drama framed in though it is by the phenomenal life of the first and last acts, presents itself in its issue as a reality no less real than the world of sense. Both realities include, and yet exclude, each other, and constantly react upon each other for better or worse.

The theme — for it may as well be admitted that Grillparzer's dramas were thematic — harked back to a "Faust" theme, with which in years past Grillparzer had toyed as a possible continuation of Goethe's *Faust I*. Faust — according to Grillparzer's plan — was to seek redemption in self-limitation (*Selbstbegrenzung*) and in contentment of soul (*Seelenfrieden*); was to renounce the devil and to enter with loving zest upon all the homely affairs of daily life. Only the conscious sense of his past misdoings was to prevent his final redemption. *A Dream is Life* depicted, as it were, an incipient Faust—a man just feeling the touch of ambition and longing to step beyond his natural limitations. In a dream these feelings transform themselves into actions of the will, and the unhappy dreamer tastes the first sweets and the final dregs of his transgression of individual limitation. At the critical moment he awakes and finds himself in the old smaller life, now cured of his former restlessness, and content to remain within his sphere.

In its metaphysics and its psychology the play was emotional rather than reflective. It was the last drama in which Grillparzer presented metaphysical duality directly in dramatic form. Thereafter, he wisely refrained from all attempts of this kind. But he never portrayed a tragic character whose fate was not conceived of a soul brooding over the metaphysical problem of life.

Grillparzer's dramas are remarkable for their variation of the general theme of *The Ancestress* and *A Dream is Life*. There is plainly evident an effort to assign every tragic failure to metaphysical causes. His heroes and heroines labor in vain because individual forms cannot contain the universal spirit. The human soul dreams of that life which transcends all forms and is yet perfect in form, — but it only dreams. It is individualized and can therefore neither find nor create a perfect reality in the world of appearances. The dual nature of the human soul is its fatal attribute.

This metaphysical temper of the poet reacted on his dramatic characters. Sometimes he created a "type," as, Sappho, Medea, Libussa, Hero; at others merely a "character," *i.e.* an eccentric being, as, Ottokar, Rachel, Bancbanus. But first

and last he always reproduced Grillparzer. Consequently the tragic element of his dramas is so often without general human force. Recent German critics have expressed a contrary opinion. But at best their analysis of his works proves only that the peculiar tragic conflict in Grillparzer's dramas may be considered a German type. We fail to recognize the necessity for the existence of this type in a society in which democracy of ideals is the living principle of progress. Grillparzer believed in an aristocracy of ideals, to which no doubt many of our own countrymen are inclined to subscribe. He grew up in the faith that world-movements and the advance of civilization emanate from exceptionally endowed men: the Titans of the race — a doctrine, by the way, which recent economic history has brought home to us in the form of "Christian ownership." His countrymen looked to the aristocratic few for guidance. Democracy was inert in Austria. If we take this into consideration, Grillparzer created forms of tragic manhood and womanhood that were typical of an aristocratic civilization. In so far — and in so far only — he held up the mirror to human life.

It must, however, not be overlooked that he, too, had moments when there seems to have been borne in upon him the negative quality of aristocratic individualism and a suspicion of the energizing force of the demos. In a moment of this kind he conceived the tragic theme for a drama, *Hannibal*, and wrote the dialogue between the Punic hero and the Roman general: —

Hannibal

(auf die Brust schlagend)

Hier ist Karthago.

Scipio

(auf seine Brust zeigend)

Hier ist nicht Rom, sonst gönnte Scipio wohl
Dem alten Helden, was ihm Rom verweigert.

And later: —

Hannibal

Und doch hat er dein Rom so oft besiegt.

Scipio

Er — Rom? Der Römer Feldherrn doch wohl nur?

Hannibal

Die Männer machen doch, so scheint's, die Stadt !

Scipio

Die Männer ; nicht der Mann, der einzelne !
Du schlugst den Varo und erschlugest Römer,
Doch Rom blieb auch bei Cannä unbesiegt.

* * * * *

Die du besiegt, sie waren keine Römer,
Selbstsüchtig eitle Thoren waren sie,
Nach Kränzen trachtend für ihr eigen Haupt.
Ein Römer aber sieht in sich nur Rom,
Rom will er heben, Rom verherrlichen,
Rom dienen, sterben nur für Rom ;
Als einen solchen siehst du mich ; ein solcher
Bin ich des Siegs für morgen so gewiss,
Als diese Hand gewiss ist meinem Arm.

* * * * *

Wenn Hannibal erliegt, erliegt Karthago —
Wenn Scipio fällt, doch triumphieret Rom !¹

¹ *Hannibal*

(striking his breast)

Here is Carthage !

Scipio

(pointing to his breast)

Here Rome is not, else Scipio might concede
What Rome denies the hoary warrior.

Hannibal

Yet Hannibal has conquered Rome !

Scipio

He — Rome ? Rome's generals, methinks, thou meanst !

Hannibal

Yet men, I trow, thy city constitute !

Scipio

Yes, men ! but ne'er an individual man.
Once Varo thou didst conquer, Romans slay,
But e'en at Cannæ Rome was undefeated.

* * * * *

Those whom thou overcam'st, they were not Romans —
Ambitious fools they were, selfseekers they,

Hannibal remained the merest fragment, proof how little sympathy its writer had for the great ideal of democracy, as the source of active patriotism.

The dramas which Grillparzer completed exemplified one and all the tragic theme of his own life. Its variations may be summarized as follows:—

Sappho—the bridgeless gulf between artistic temperament and the ordinary, let us say, rational forms of human living.

A Faithful Servant of His Master—the tragedy of manhood clinging to a moral principle in the face of conditions that pervert its ends.

Ottokar—heroism undone by polyglot nationality.

The Billows of Love and Ocean (Hero and Leander)—the demoniac power of love.

Libussa—the clash of simplicity and culture.

Brother Quarrels in the House of Habsburg—the doom of the recluse who builds of his own ideals a dam to stem the tide of history.

The Jewess of Toledo—the sacrifice of a human soul spurning the principle of caste.

In effect the old problem of the conflict between instinct and reason engaged Grillparzer's imaginative faculties. The "soul beautiful" of Schiller's philosophy was his beau ideal, but in his dramas he expounded the "soul distraught." Instinct and reason waged war upon each other in his life; they were irreconcilable forces in his dramas. Either unreasoning sentiment for that which has been and still is, frustrates in these the efforts of the more enlightened and progressive forces of

Reaching for wreaths to crown their single heads.

A Roman in himself sees only Rome ;

Rome would he raise and Rome e'er glorify,

Serve Rome, and dying, die alone for Rome.

As such an one behold me : and as such an one

I am as sure of vict'ry on the morrow

As for this hand my good right arm doth vouch.

* * * * *

Let Hannibal succumb, then Carthage falls—

Let Scipio fall, yet Rome will surely triumph !

society, or impetuous action, equally unreasoning, is confounded by the inertia of institutions once rational in their scope.

Grillparzer, therefore, never succeeded in giving to any of his heroes the full stature of a man. His nearest approach thereto was in the character of Ottokar. His heroines, however, were for the same reason more womanly, since the poet's own emotional character enabled him to unravel the finer skein of feminine nature with a hand more deft and true.

A word of the poetic world wherein Grillparzer roamed in solitude and which he reproduced in his dramas. That it was not the present or the future conditioned by the present, the titles of his works suffice to show. His dramas were for the greater part historical. But his world of the past was historical only in its empiric facts. The conscious facts of the past, the spirit that animated its phenomena, Grillparzer considered beyond dramatic recall. In his opinion, no poet can free himself from that personal bias which the great sum of events intervening between past and present gives to his thought and feeling. Therefore, Grillparzer never attempted to reconstruct, *i.e.* to interpret, the phenomena of the past in the spirit of their age, and he had little patience with those who made the attempt. History and legend he viewed from the vantage of his own consciousness and into both he projected the modern spirit. Thus he sought to make ancient story real to modern feeling and thought. Herein he was successful, though his idealizations brought him small recompense either in peace of mind or in capacity for broader appreciation of human activity. Characteristic of his quest in this his poetic world was the substance of his longing for Italy: —

Dann kehr' ich heim mit stolzem Sinn,
Und schaff' in gesättigter Ruh,
Was jung soll sein, wie ich es bin,
Und alt soll werden, wie du.¹

¹ Then home I'll proudly wend my way
And fashion serenely content
Creations youthful as my May,
And young when your Autumn is spent.

— Last stanza of *Kennst du das Land?* 1819.

Such had been his hope as he turned his face southward beyond the Alps. But serene contentment was never his.

There certainly was a strain of stubborn manliness in the attitude of Grillparzer toward life. Not one of his dramas that did not glorify emotional conduct despite its inevitable tragic consequences ; few that railed at life for demanding of its finer organisms the sacrifice of personal happiness. [Tragic dualism was for Grillparzer the simple destiny of mankind, to be accepted with such equanimity and resignation as each individual might take unto himself in the thought that ultimate human progress is furthered by this dualism. Grillparzer, however, rarely succeeded in pressing home the tragic katharsis, *i.e.* in impressing upon reader or audience the optimism of resignation.) The feeling of revolt against the necessity of such sacrifices on the part of well-meaning and aspiring individuals is rarely quite dissolved in the sustaining conviction that these tragic struggles leave life better than they found it. Morbid this pessimism was not for the reason that in his dramas the actualities of life were reflected as realities no less real than his subjective idealizations. But Grillparzer was never able to feel the full poetic force of his optimistic teleology, and therefore never created a dramatic work that brought even to him the joy of a sublime resignation. William Scherer's characterization of Grillparzer as "one conquered by life" is therefore qualifiedly true even of Grillparzer the dramatist.

In no single work is the truth of Scherer's statement more clearly seen than in Grillparzer's autobiographical short story, *The Poor Musician*. Rounded and compacted, and yet saturated with the sad tragedy of his own isolation — it is the most artistic work we have from his pen. For the student of Grillparzer-psychology it is a veritable treasure trove. *The Poor Musician* was the one piece of his creative genius that unflinchingly grappled with the great problem of resignation ; the one piece that pictured resignation ; but also the one piece that made resignation itself tragic. The poor, half-witted fiddler, shipwrecked in life, coddling his woe as the last sweet treasure it has left him, pouring it forth in the midnight solitude of his

chamber in music that is music to none but the illusioned player — such is resignation. Fortunate it was for Grillparzer that to this kind of resignation he never quite gave way and that he breasted the silent current of his life to the end with such strength as was his. He could well write later in life: "That most affairs of life to which I put my hand miscarry, is probably due to the fact that I do not undertake them as they should be undertaken in order to carry them through to success, but merely seek to be done with them as quickly as possible. Therefore, perplexities persist in returning, and I know quite well that in complaining of my evil star, I must ascribe all fault to my own blundering and procrastination, my hesitation and impatience." Thus Grillparzer weighed himself and the world in a just balance, and the resultant self-knowledge saved him from the fate of his contemporary, Lenau.

Nicholaus Lenau, preëminently the greatest lyric poet of Austria, never acquired that sense of objective causality which saved Grillparzer. With Lenau subjectivity reigned supreme. He possessed absolutely no objective sense of the world and affairs of the world. The dark shadow that lurked in the background of Grillparzer's consciousness spread its sable wings over Lenau's soul and finally shut out the last faint ray of reason. He shared the fate of Hölderlin. His propensity to morbid brooding was a sad birthright, of which a mother's overgreat and foolish love, irrational training, and nomadic home life helped to make a blighting curse. But conditions of Austrian civilization played a far more subtle and original part in his undoing than is commonly believed.

Lenau was to a certain extent the victim of polyglot civilization. The formative period of his boyhood was spent in contact with Bohemian civilization and Bohemian landscape. In his veins coursed blood of Slavic strain. His instincts were Slavic, and to these his conscious impressions of German life and German landscape were subservient. With jealous insistence his grandparents snatched him from the free and easy life of his native haunts, but their endeavor to rear the youth

according to the artificial formula of Austrian society only transformed boyish indolence into conscious Bohemianism. Lenau did not stop at mere disregard of conventional social forms; all discipline, whether from without or from within, grew irksome. Self-culture as well as self-restraint he treated as masked tyranny. Aimless and desultory studies produced aimless and desultory ideas of vocation. His mental energies were never disciplined, and yet he foolishly grappled with problems that have baffled the keenest minds. In consequence emotional susceptibility deteriorated into a kind of emotional self-torture, and his imagination became correspondingly attenuated. Instead of welcoming new impressions from the wealth of living forms, and expanding his imaginative powers under their influence, he shut himself off from all sympathy with the new that he might guard the better his possession of the old.

It has been said of Lenau that no other German poet was so intimate with nature, and so successful in bringing its "moods" home to the human heart. And it must be admitted that in many, perhaps the majority, of his poems of nature the exquisite charm and ravishing beauty of his poetic landscape cast a witchery over us that corresponds to the spell under which he wrote. Really superb in this quality are Lenau's *Songs of the Rushes* and *Forest Hymns*. "Nature," he wrote, "is my dearest friend, and human life, as reflected in the mobile waves of our passions, is only a symbol of nature. You ask me: Is not poetry, then, your dearest friend? No, poetry I cannot call a friend; for, methinks, poetry am I; the real self of myself is poetry." The lines are important because they disclose the true source of his songs of nature, and, in fact, the ultimate source of all his poetry. This source was ever and always Lenau, and because it was Lenau the flow of his imagination was but an attenuated stream, brilliant though the coloring that flashed across its narrow surface.

It would be absurd to claim for Lenau that all-encompassing sympathy for nature-life which was Hölderlin's, or even to compare his susceptibility for natural phenomena with the

appreciative sympathy of Eichendorff. He loved nature, but he loved it in quite a different way than either Hölderlin or Eichendorff. He loved it, not because of that which it had to tell him, but because of that which he had to tell it. Nature was not his mistress, but his confidante; not the lordly expounder of universal law, but the friend to whom he carried his joys and woes, more often his woes, for a sympathetic response. It was the reflection of himself in nature that he loved. He avoided touring the Alps, because their majestic grandeur might have something to tell him that would not harmonize with his memories of the Bohemian highlands. He extolled the landscape of Bohemia, because — well, because of its “Bohemian aspect,” its *dolce far niente*. He crossed the sea, but the sea had no message for him other than a summons to the silent solitude of its hidden depths. He trod the forest primeval of America, and it left him cold, nay it left him colder, for it spoke to him only of loneliness and decay. Even the Falls of Niagara and the valley of the Hudson barely touched his imagination.

“The self of my self is poetry.” It was true, and the more lamentable because true. In this belief Lenau exiled his consciousness from the world. The *noli me tangere* of his soul left it with each year more desolate, until he actually courted his forlorn desolation as Grillparzer’s poor musician cosseted his woe. Well he might sing of the night:—

Weil auf mich du dunkles Auge,
 Uebe deine ganze Macht
 Ernste, milde, träumerische,
 Unergründlich süsse Nacht!

Nimm mit deinem Zauberdunkel
 Diese Welt von hinnen mir,
 Dass du über meinem Leben
 Einsam schwebest für und für.¹

¹ Dwell on me, dark eye mysterious,
 Spend the fulness of thy might,
 Kindly solemn, dream enraptured,
 Sweeter than all thought, O night.

How vastly different this conception of the world-excluding night from that of other poets, *e.g.* of Hebbel, in whose hymns of the night human consciousness would fain expand until it embrace the universe!

Much nonsense has been written of Lenau's "world-sorrow." *Weltschmerz*, the Germans have chosen to call that pessimistic melancholia which sees in phenomenal life only a vale of tears through which humanity and nature are by some inscrutable law forced to pass that the spirit of life universal may become conscious of itself. *Weltschmerz* signifies vicarious grief, grief at the fearful tragedy of all sentient life. Lenau was incapable of such grief in genuine form. He projected his subjectivity not only into nature but into humanity as well, and the unutterable woe of his own life was therefore the cup from which he quaffed in feverish frenzy poetic intoxication. The woe of other lives concerned him little. His poetry does not breathe *weltschmerz*, *i.e.* world sorrow, but *selbstschmerz*, *i.e.* self-sorrow. Almost sublime was the folly of this hermit-dreamer when he wrote such lines as the following:—

Ich seh' ein Kreuz dort ohne Heiland ragen,
Als hätte dieses kalte Herbsteswetter,
Das stürmend von den Bäumen weht die Blätter,
Das Gottesbild vom Stamme fortgetragen.

Soll ich dafür den Gram, in tausend Zügen
Ringsausgebreitet, in ein Bildnis kleiden?
Soll die Natur ich, und ihr Todesleiden,
Dort an des Kreuzes leere Stätte fügen?¹

Let thy magic darkness settle,
Let it snatch the world from me,
Hover in thy lonely grandeur
O'er my life eternally. — *Sehnsucht*.

¹ A cross without its saviour meets my vision,
As though the storm of autumn's dreary blast,
Unleaving tree on tree, had torn and cast
God's image from its place in wild derision.

O grief, on thousand features round me etched,
Shall for that place I shape the image of thy stature?
Uplift thy mortal agonies, O Nature,
To yonder cross's empty arms outstretchèd? — *Das Kreuz*.

All his poetic striving answered, Yes! Face to face with such colossal self-deception one can but stand awed and mute. To cavil with Lenau is impossible. The fact has to be accepted that his consciousness of self was at least for him equivalent to consciousness of the world. In one respect he was right when he said, "The real self of myself is poetry!" He hardly possessed any other than an artistic consciousness. In Grillparzer artistic and moral consciousness were contending factors. Lenau's moral consciousness was undeveloped, *i.e.* he was conscious of objective forms of life simply as stimulants of his artistic craving. He recognized no law other than the law of his artistic instincts. We may admit that problems of practical import need not interest a poet directly, but they ought to challenge his moral sympathy. Only through this sympathy can poetry possess itself of the ideals of humanity and hope to speak for humanity. This Lenau failed to realize, else could he never have written the lines, *Poetry and Intruders*. And one may hold to this view despite Lenau's *Songs of Poland* or his attack on civic tyranny in such poems as *The Prisoner*, *At the Grave of a Prime Minister*, *Farewell Song of the Emigrant*, and *Protest*.

Europamüde is another word coined by German critics to express the disgust of high-spirited young men at European conditions during the decades of reaction, and to explain their longing for foreign lands and their flight in spirit, if not always in body, from their native soil. The last stanza of *Farewell Song of the Emigrant*, the emigrant being Lenau, apparently sounded this note:—

Du neue Welt, du freie Welt,
An deren blütenreichen Strand
Die Flut der Tyrannei zerschellt,
Ich grüsse dich, mein Vaterland!¹

Lenau had come north. He had found a warm welcome in

¹ Thou world so new, thou world so free,
Against whose flower-spangled strand
Is broke the flood of tyranny,
I hail thee fair, my fatherland.

Suabia, and had been received with open arms by Uhland, K. Mayer, J. Kerner, and others. To Kerner, along whose path of life comedy and tragedy chased each other like flitting lights and shadows over an autumn landscape, Lenau was irresistibly attracted. He seemed to feel the affinity of their two natures and to suspect the saving grace of Kerner's sense of the ridiculous. "O Kerner, Kerner!" he wailed, "I am no ascetic, and yet I should like to be in my grave. Help me out of this melancholia which neither joking, preaching, nor cursing can dispel! Often I am heavy at heart, as if I carried about in me a dead person. Help me, my friend! The soul also has its tendons which, once severed, never knit again. I feel as if something in me had been torn and severed. Help me, Kerner!" That was the man who wrote *Farewell Song of the Emigrant*, and who fled to the New World. "Europamüde"? No! Lenau's human soul cried out in its fearful loneliness and thirsted for companionship. In its abnormal state his consciousness craved abnormal and, humanly speaking, impossible conditions. Scenery, atmosphere, colors, and sounds—all that speaks to us in nature—had to be keyed to the abnormal pitch of his soul, else the voice of nature sounded not for him. Civilization, in whatever form he came in contact therewith, had no fellowship for him, since he demanded of civilization the full sway of primitive instincts. Not because he was weary of Europe, but because out of his craving for life he constructed the eicon of a land where nature was his nature, civilization his civilization, and both in simplest unison the correlates of his artistic consciousness—therefore he sought America. There the soil was virgin, there civilization primitive. There nature still went her way free from the distorting hand of artifice. There human beings lived their simple childlike lives in lordly sovereignty, unfettered in their instincts by conventional restraints. Not the freedom of its republican institutions, rather its freedom from institutions, its primitiveness—all of which he postulated—drew Lenau westward to the old New World.

For this very reason harsher criticism has not been written

of American landscape and American life than in Lenau's letters to friends and relatives, or in his poem *Forest Primeval*. Once in America, his only thought was to escape from the country as quickly as possible. He had come to a land where people preferred to act and where the absence of emotional meditation implied for him the absence of emotion. And so purblind was Lenau to all but emotional idealization that he ascribed sordid motives to this action even though he recognized its practical morality. The paralysis of Lenau's moral sense, of the faculty that correlates ideas and deeds, was responsible for his almost cynical sneers at the Western World, of which he had entertained such extravagant hopes. His letters home abounded in sneers of this kind. In one of them he wrote: —

“The Americans know nothing and seek nothing but money; they cherish no ideas; consequently the state is not a spiritual or moral institution (fatherland), but only a materialistic convention. That Americans have fought for their republic proves nothing; that most Americans would probably sacrifice themselves in case of hostile attack proves nothing. The value of a thing cannot, as you know, be judged by that which men do for it.”

Lenau's lyrics were the cry of a soul lost in its own agony, and in so far as human nature the world round has its moments of saddest brooding and self-inflicted suffering, its hours of loneliness and unutterable longing for a self-centred and self-sufficient existence, — in so far, these lyrics phrased the secret woe of human struggle. But the longing of Lenau for freedom had no direct connotation to civic life. Freedom of soul was the note that quivered through his verse, — the innocent freedom of childhood, the freedom of unquestioning faith that passes all understanding, the freedom of that wondrous paradise of human dreams where “there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain.” The bitterness and despair of his life came from the thought that such freedom could never more be his, and that the step from childhood into manhood — from simple faith to human knowledge, from the dreamlife of intuition into the garish light of self-consciousness

—could never be retraced. How wondrous sad and beautiful to quote one of Lenau's many phrasings of this his heart's longing, is that vision in his *Faust* in which Lenau sees himself as a child : —

Die Wellen glühn und singen Wonnelieder,
Melodisch lockt zu sich die Tiefe nieder.
Der Träumer lauscht und meint sie zu verstehen,
Und jeden Gruss, den Frühlingslüfte wehen;
Und lange lauscht er wunderbar beklommen,
Der Luft, des Meers so heimatlichen Sprachen :
Nun sieht er plötzlich ostenher geschwommen,
Dem Untergang zugleiten, einen Nachen ;
Vorüber treibt am Eiland ihn der Wind,
Da wandert eine Frau mit ihrem Kind,
Ein schönes Kind mit goldnem Lockenhaar,
Die Augen wie der Morgenhimmel klar,
Des Mundes Lächeln seliges Genügen,
Die Ruh der Unschuld in den holden Zügen.
Wie sie an Faust vorüberfahren dicht,
Blickt ihm die Frau gar traurig ins Gesicht.
"O Mutter," ruft er aus — mit stillem Weinen
Legt sie die Hand hindeutend auf den Kleinen,
"So warst du einst !" Das war ihr stummes Klagen.¹

¹ The waves glow bright and heave their blissful sighs,
Melodious lurings from the deep sea rise.
Their greetings to the listening dreamer bring
Messages wafted on the airs of spring ;
Thus long he listens, wondrously oppressed,
To homelike voices of the air and sea.
And lo ! a skiff glides gently toward the West
From out the East. Under the island's lea
It passes onward, borne by breezes mild,
And in the skiff a woman with her child,
A beauteous child, with golden curly hair,
And eyes than morn's clear sky more fair,
A smile upon his lips of perfect bliss,
His brow still touched by innocence's kiss.
And as they closely glide past Faust apace,
The woman gazes sadly in his face.
"O Mother !" he exclaims — With tearful yearning,
Her hand laid on the child, and to him turning :
"Thus you were once !" she sadly made reply.

And then the vision vanishes, and with it the peace and joy of nature. Darkness settles down, and storm and lightning hold their orgy.

From the faith of childhood to the knowledge of the eternal contradictions of life, — that is the pathway strewn with thorns along which we travel to manhood. From knowledge to generous, large-hearted human activity, — that is the only pathway leading upward from the depths of sceptical despair to the heights of a new hope in the divinity of our being. Such was Lenau's creed formulated in his poem *Glauben-Wissen-Handeln*, and the tragedy of his life lay in the fact that, despite his intellectual cognition of this truth, he could not press forward to the sympathetic deed, and in the scepticism of his manhood fell back upon the vanished innocence of childhood for aid and comfort.

The last hope of Lenau for fellowship with life perished in America, and from thence on he brooded over the only reality that remained to him. In his self he sought the entire substance of existence, and burrowed in his finite individuality for the eternal secret of the universe. And there his doom befell him. Once *Faust* was seriously undertaken, there was thereafter for Lenau no escape, and the consummation of his poetic travail was the madness of *Don Juan*.

Faust, *Savonarola*, *The Albigenes*, *Don Juan* — the four more important works written by Lenau after his return from America — belong to that class of speculative poetry which makes of art the handmaid of transcendental philosophy. Faust's exclamation : —

Ich will ihm gegenüber treten,
Beglücken kann mich nur ein Wissen,
Das mein ist und von seinem losgerissen,
Ich will mich immer als mich selber fühlen¹ —

¹ To Him (*i.e.* the Deity) I pass the challenge of my single self.
For knowledge cannot bring me happiness
Lest it be mine and from His own divorced.
My self I will at all times feel as mine.

— *Faust: Die Verschwörung.*

was the irrevocable step toward the abysmal depth of that fearful self-torture to which Lenau descended. The experience of Faust was the experience of Lenau. From the black night wherein he enshrouded his human soul, Lenau could cry with Faust : —

Lebendig in den Grabesfinsternissen,
Hab' ich, erwacht, die Augen aufgerissen,
Und ich begann mit uneriness'nen Klagen,
Mich selber anzunagen.
Ich habe nun gesprengt die dumpfe Haft,
Mit doppelt heisser Leidenschaft
Streck' ich die Arme wieder aus
Nach Gott und Welt aus meinem Totenhaus.
Nach Gott? — doch nein! — der Kummer ist es nur!
Könnt' ich vergessen, dass ich Creatur!¹

Like his Faust, Lenau also had moments when the world of ideas and the world of appearances seemed the "blurred consciousness of God" (des Gottbewusstseins Trübung), and Faust's final words were but the premonition of the poet's end : —

Ich bin ein Traum mit Lust und Schuld und Schmerz,
Und träume mir das Messer in das Herz!²

All his self-dissecting brought no satisfaction to Lenau, and in portentous prognosis of his own fate, he closed the story of Faust with the words of Mephistopheles : —

¹ A living soul in death's dark, murky house entombed,
I wrenched my eyes wide ope with glassy stare,
Began with boundless lamentations, never ceasing,
Myself to gnaw my vitals.
But now, I've burst my prison's loathsome bonds;
Once more beyond the house of death
I stretch these arms with fiercer yearning
To lay my hands on God and on the World.
On God? — not God! nay, only grief I seize:
Could I forget that I am but a creature!

— *Faust: Faust's Tod.*

² I am a dream with joy and grief and guilt
And dream my heart pierced to the dagger's hilt.

[*He stabs himself.*]

— *Faust: Faust's Tod.*

Du warst von der Versöhnung nie so weit,
 Als da du wolltest mit der fieberheissen
 Verzweiflungsglut vertilgen allen Streit,
 Dich, Welt und Gott in Eins zusammenschweissen,
 Da bist du in die Arme mir gesprungen,
 Nun hab' ich dich und halte dich umschlungen! ¹

Lenau lost himself in a maze of metaphysical speculation, from which his untrained and undisciplined mind was unable to extricate his soul. The emotional climax of his metaphysics was reached in *Don Juan*. In the amorous profligacy of this fabled character, Lenau intended — though without success — to depict the craving of the individual soul for union with the idea of femininity. Soon after this attempt the night of insanity, alive with the spectral torments of his waking days, closed in on the poet. "Poor Nimbsch" — Lenau's favorite name — "is very unhappy!" was thereafter for a few years the pathetic cry of the stricken man.

Philosophical and psychological criticism will find in the last poetic works of Lenau much to ponder and the germs of many an undeveloped truth. For us they can only record the finality of his aberration and the logical contraction of an impulsive soul incapable of coming in touch with human life. In part this inability was temperamental, in part conditioned, or at least intensified and made chronic, by the barren state of civic life cursed by the rule of Metternich. And so there was objective as well as subjective justification in the lines of the final canto of Lenau's *Albigenses*: —

Woher der düstre Unmut unsrer Zeit,
 Der Groll, die Eile, die Zerissenheit? —
 Das Sterben in der Dämmerung ist schuld
 An dieser freudenarmen Ungeduld;
 Herb ist's, das lang ersehnte Licht zu schauen
 Zu Grabe gehn in seinem Morgengrauen.

¹ Ne'er wast thou more irreconcilable
 Than in thy fev'rish passionate despair
 Striving to banish every contradiction,
 To weld thyself and God and World in one.
 'Twas then thou hurl'dst thee in my open arms;
 Now have I thee and hold thee in my keeping.

Und müssen wir vor Tag zu Asche sinken,
Mit heissen Wünschen, unvergoltnen Qualen,
So wird doch in der Freiheit goldnen Strahlen
Erinnerung an uns als Thräne blinken.¹

Lenau was in his day one of the favorite poets of the Germans. In his poetry there came to expression that sense of dazed perplexity and helpless longing which overcame so many Germans under the pressure of reactionary policies. They were shut out from wholesome contact with the great world of common interests and penned up in their subjectivity. The philosophy of such conditions bore fruit in the pessimism of Schopenhauer, which sought the acme of ethics in the loss of individuality, in the negation of the will to live. For since the will to live expresses itself in individuality—thus Schopenhauer argued—and since individuality means separation, opposition, strife, suffering, the will to live conflicts with the fundamental moral feeling which bids us realize the suffering of others as our own. Therefore to love life, to cling to individual existence, is incompatible with the highest standard of morality. The logic of Schopenhauer was the logic of a situation in which the life of each individual seemed an exclusive unit. Small opportunity was offered men to affiliate and to recognize through common action their relation to an inclusive organism. Under these circumstances nothing was more natural than to treat individuality as the affirmation of a detached self. The individuality of Lenau was of that stamp. Though his pessimism had no moral content, yet his isolation accorded singly with the definition of individuality on which Schopenhauer based his philosophy of pessimism.

¹ Whence comes the sombre unrest of our day,
This haste, this sullen hate, and self-distraction ?
Ah, dying in the half-light bears the blame
For all our joyless, querulous impatience :
Cruel to see the long-desired light,
Yet pine away in morning's cold gray dawn !
And are we doomed to dust ere day shall break,
With yearnings hot and torments unrequited,
Yet shall in freedom's lustrous golden rays
Our mem'ry glisten as a shining tear.

It is no wonder that Lenau's poetry was formless, particularly so in the last years of his life. Self was his only conscious reality, and this spiritual astigmatism distorted his vision. The lines of objective reality were blurred, and only the transverse lines of subjective reality could supply the form of his poetic images. Therefore the transmutation of self into a poetic object was scarcely within the bounds of the possible; he had only the image of his self as the model of his form. What Lenau did, as one recalls the final impression left by his writings, was to transmute his self into poetic emotion. His lyrics have never called for musical setting, for they are essentially musical phrasings in terms of speech. To clothe poetic emotions in the form of poetic ideas — to objectivize self — that was the characteristic endeavor of Lenau, as it was of Grillparzer and of all the other poets of isolation. To be constantly thwarted in this endeavor was their tragic fate. Grillparzer knew this, Lenau felt it, and Grillparzer's poem *Incubus* epitomized perhaps most concisely the fatal, subtle insinuation of this extreme consciousness of self between poetic aspiration and poetic form: —

Und wenn's mir einmal gelang,
Durchzubrechen den Drang,
Frei mit des Geistes Gewalt
Durch bis zu Licht und Gestalt;
Unter der Hand es sich bildet und hebt,
Lebendiges Leben das Tote belebt,
Und es nun dasteht, ein athmendes Bild,
Vom Geiste des Alls und des Bildners erfüllt;
Da stiehlt er hinein sich mit list'gem Bemerk,
Und grinset mich an aus dem eigenen Werk:
Bin's, Meister! nur ich, dem die Wohnung du wölbst,
Sieh, nichtig dein Werklein, und nichtig du selbst.

For such types as Grillparzer and Lenau one can feel genuine pity. Their lives were at least a struggle, the more heroic because waged to the bitter end regardless of the cost in personal happiness. A certain nobility of soul is impressed upon their poetry of negation which, even in our most unsympathetic moods, we must respect and, not at all infrequently, admire.

To say as much of their North German contemporary, Christian Dietrich Grabbe, is impossible for all but an extreme partisan. Grabbe was vulgar,—vulgar in his way of living, vulgar in his whole inner make-up, vulgar in the literary prodigies that he inflicted on an unwilling world. To a normal mind his writings are little short of disgusting; their style offends refined taste, and their spiritual form is crude to the verge of coarseness. Grabbe's dramas are nightmares of a decadent, and they might well rest in the oblivion to which popular judgment has consigned them, were it not for the fact that they are typical of the fury which civic starvation began to beget in Germany.

Grabbe had no moral consciousness. Lenau's remained undeveloped and was distorted by his poetic subjectivity; but Grabbe's was non-existent. Phenomenal human relations suggested none of those great ideas to him of the reality of which we are conscious when we speak of brotherhood, friendship, loyalty, unselfishness, love, concord, peace, and the divine glory of life. The ideas which the complexion of life suggested to him,—if indeed one is justified in speaking of suggestions at all—were wholly negative: antipathy, enmity, disloyalty, selfishness, hatred, discord, strife, and the satanic gloom of the bottomless pit.

Grabbe attributed his frightful isolation to the gloomy impressions made upon him as a child in the prison at Detmold, where his father was overseer. Others have ascribed his demoralization to alcoholic excesses. Still others would explain his vaulting pessimism as the logical perversion of genius through poverty and social ostracism. Upon a morose temperament, such as Grabbe's undoubtedly was, the artificial ideals of German society necessarily reacted with debasing effect. Poverty and caste-feeling embittered his school life, and at an age when youthful impulses are prone to disregard individual inequalities, Grabbe had already tasted the bitter dregs of inferior birth, cramped resources, and lowly breeding. Immature as he still was, his self-respect became jaundiced and incapable of recognizing the natural law of gradation in life. The worthless claims of wealth and birth induced him to dis-

regard the more substantial claims of good breeding and culture. One needs to remember that his first drama, *The Duke of Gothland*, had its conceptional origin in Grabbe's college years. Before he took up a man's struggle with life, before he failed in his official career, and before alcoholism began to sap the vital energies of mind and body, he set forth in this tragedy his world-destructive philosophy. It is there that the unreality of all human ties is proclaimed, and one by one our ideas of sympathetic human relations cast in shattered fragments at our feet. That Grabbe was master of a certain savage power is not to be denied. With almost diabolical cunning he could picture humanity clinging to the reality of its ideal values of life, only to make more drastic the total fallacy of this reality. One would like to feel that Grabbe put his soul in the cry of the Duke of Gothland: —

Gib

Mir meinen Bruder, gib
 Mir meine Unschuld wieder!
 Gib meinen Sohn und gib mit ihm zugleich
 Mein teures Weib mir wieder! Meinen Ruhm
 Und meine Ehre, meine Freuden, meinen Himmel, mein
 Bewusstsein gib
 Mir wieder! wieder! wieder!¹

But the drama tells us that such things do not really exist in this world, that they never existed here. Our faith in them is the *fata morgana* of the desert of life that lures us on with false hopes. The only true philosophy is — indifference. Thus Grabbe's wild imagination early revelled in the lust of destruction, pictured with fiendish joy the desolation of perdition, and, having cast aside all restraint, gloried thereafter in its power

¹ Give back to me

My brother! Give back to me
 My innocence! Give back to me
 My son, my wife belov'd! Give back to me
 My fame, and honor mine, my joy, my heaven! Give back
 My consciousness
 Once more! Once more! Once more!

— *Duke of Gothland*, Act V, 5.

of barbaric titanism. But that is not the power of poetry, and mere drastic description is not dramatic action.

In this isolation, the equal of which literary history has seldom recorded, the titanism of Grabbe developed its hideous form. Two passages, spoken by the Duke of Gothland, prove that Grabbe understood the relation between his titanic striving and his pessimism : —

O jeder Sterbliche, und säss er auf
Dem volkumdrängtesten von allen Thronen,
Er wandelt einsam unter Millionen,
Kein Anderer
Kann seine Freude, seinen Schmerz verstehen,
Und einsam muss er untergehen! ¹

Out of this plaintive pessimism of the Duke the brutal selfishness of human doings hatches revolutionary titanism : —

Einer von den grossen Aerzten
Der Menschheit, deren sie so sehr bedarf,
Die mit den einzigen Heilmitteln, die ihr fruchten,
Mit Feu'r und Schwert, mit Krieg und Pest sie heilen,
Einer von den gepries'nen Attilas,
Sullas und Cäsars will ich werden! ²

Still even a Grabbe could not sustain imagination on absolute negation. Having crushed out of existence, in *The Duke of Gothland*, our ideal conceptions of life, he too found it necessary to seek for something wherewith to fill the void. A new

¹ O, every mortal, though enthroned he sit
Amid the densest mass of surging folk,
Alone and lonely wanders, one of millions ;
No other being
May comprehend his sorrow or his joy,
And lonely must he pass away.

— *Duke of Gothland*, Act IV, 1.

² One would I be of those great leeches
Of whom the world so sorely stands in need,
Whose remedies alone with purging power heal it,
With fire and sword, with war and pestilence ;
One of the far-famed Attilas,
Sullas and Cæsars would I be.

— *Ibid.*, Act III, 1.

world was to be created in which ideas were possible and of which it might not be said : —

Noch Niemand ging mit Idealen für
Der Menschheit Wohl in's Leben, der
Es nicht als Bösewicht,
Als ausgemachter Menschenfeind verlassen hätte.¹

This something Grabbe sought in history. Significantly enough for the times in which he lived, it was the revelation of a great unitary principle, the victory of a universal idea over individual striving. One must give Grabbe credit for these his intentions, though he failed to realize them in his dramas. It was evidently in his mind to show how this transcendental unity of life is reflected in the destruction of individual forms through titanic individualities such as Arminius, Sulla, Hannibal, Napoleon, in whom, however, as individuals, the idea itself is individualized, and who therefore suffer the ultimate fate of individuality. But Grabbe was not the man to realize such intentions. The fine thread of his purpose snapped again and again as it passed through his clumsy hands, and with bungling vulgarity he fitted into the gaps he tore in his silken line pieces of coarse worsted from his gross and soiled consciousness. For the uncouth pessimism of Grabbe brutalized the individual being, and in doing so it vulgarized, through drastic individualization, his conception of universality.

And this was true of his last as well as of his earlier dramas ; it was as true of his vain attempts at historical objectivation as of his subjective ebullitions ; it was as true of *Cinderella* as of *Don Juan and Faust*. His intentions were sufficiently ambitious, and one can have no quarrel with his purpose to impersonate in Don Juan the materialism of life, or better stated, the tendency toward disintegration into individual forms ; in Faust the idealism of life or the tendency toward unity, and in the dra-

¹ For human weal no one has cherished ever
Ideals and gone forth in life,
Who left it other than
A malefactor or confirmed misanthropist.

matic interweaving of the fates of both characters the tragic antithesis in human existence. But the embodiments of an imagination that refused to recognize any limitations either of good taste or common sense, and that willingly descended into the mire and leaped unhesitatingly beyond the bonds of intelligible conceiving, one may well decline to regard as powerful poetic productions. Grabbe has found his sponsors among recent German critics, and it is true that his intentions foreshadowed the powerful symbolism of Friedrich Hebbel and of Richard Wagner. Nevertheless intentions are not poetry, though they may be poetic.

It is not easy for Americans to appreciate the vulgarizing force of the situation in which Grabbe was placed. If it were possible to conceive our own city slums as a distinctive class to which society said : none of your members or offspring shall enter the sacred circle of our existence, our occupations shall never be their occupations, our education shall not be their education, our culture shall not be their culture, and from association with us they shall evermore be debarred ; and if it were possible further to conceive acquiescence on the part of these outcasts in this social mandate, and then born into such a gehenna a youth of querulous temper with aspirations for personal delimitation such as even a street gamin may entertain — then we might perchance comprehend what made Grabbe's imagination essentially vulgar. He was not the child of city slums, but the position wherein he was placed by birth was, in every essential, analogous to the supposititious one stated. Born within the confines of prison-life, reared in Northern Germany where the lower classes were not bound together by a feeling of comradeship such as Raimund was privileged to experience in Vienna, Grabbe signalized through his literary work the lowest ebb in the spiritual life of the German people.

Grillparzer, Lenau, Grabbe, were types possible only at a time when the opportunities for wholesome personal interest in common affairs of life were so circumscribed and restricted as to dwarf moral consciousness and discredit the reality of actualities. Grillparzer's *A Dream is Life* with its theme, half of Life is a

Dream ; Lenau's *Faust* and the conclusion, all life is a dream ; Grabbe's *Duke of Gothland* and its formula, life is a nightmare — were successive recessions away from the life-inspired poetry of the Wars of Liberation. And as the hope of the nation had been keenest in North Germany, so in North Germany despair reached its limit in infuriated negation of all spiritual values. But for this very reason in North Germany the desire first asserted itself to make human relations the realization of human ideals, to turn once more to affirmation from the utter despondency of negation. It was here that public consciousness reasserted itself in an attempt to reconstruct civic life, and thereby issued in a new era of constructive poetry.

CHAPTER VII

CIVIC AWAKENING

FORERUNNERS OF CONSTRUCTIVE POETRY AND THEIR DEMOCRATIC IDEALS

IMMERMANN, HEGEL, THE "YOUNG GERMANS"

GOETHE was the Nestor of German literati in the second and third decades of the century and the dominant power in the world of letters. He was the standard by which young men measured their efforts, or by which others gauged the worth of these efforts. Goethe's *Faust I*, *William Meister*, and *Autobiography* called for imitation and emulation. Resenting the overlordship of the Weimar autocrat, many young poets sought to pluck the laurels from his brow. Yet this very ambition proclaimed the influence of the master. The Faust-theme would not have engaged the attention of so many poets had not Goethe's poem made the story of Faust a symbol of human discord.

Great as the influence of Goethe was, it was not the all-determining factor in the field of literature. Grillparzer, Lenau, Grabbe, would not have concerned themselves with a poetic rephrasing of the Faust-theme had not the conditions of their lives emphasized the dualism of human nature. They felt that their consciousness of duality rested on different postulates than Goethe's, and that Goethe, therefore, had not spoken the final word. "Epigoni" they were, since the shadow of Goethe and Schiller still fell athwart their path; but they were "progoni" as well, for their faces were turned away from these great classicists and set toward the future.

It has, moreover, become customary, even among literary critics who have regarded the poets of isolation in the first

instance as children of their times, and only in the second as emulators of Schiller or Goethe, to consider these poets as the belated offspring of an era that was passing away, as epigoni of a civilization that had outlived its usefulness. Here, too, a half truth has been invested with the authority of truth. No form of civilization wanes unless it be through the force of new ideals. Humanity grows restless because it begins to suspect the possibility of other values than those realized in the whilom organization of its social relations. The moment of dead rest when existing values become conventions implies in itself the promise of a new movement, and the negation of what is contains the portent of what is to be. However aristocratic the isolation of German poets from Chamisso to Grabbe, it was permeated with that element which directed the thought and activity of coming generations. The longing for democratic ideals was transforming the aristocracy of the poets, and the craving for unity in variety was responsible for their isolation. Unfortunately temperament and personal experiences induced them to search for this unity in the variety of subjective experiences not also in the variety of objective facts. They failed to appreciate that their longing was shared by their countrymen and that in its social nature lay the suggestion of a possible unity. The unity of German consciousness had again to be felt by German poets.

Karl Immermann was one of the first to realize this pressing need, the first in fact to formulate distinctly the nineteenth-century theory of art. Epigrammatically he condensed this theory in the statement : "The noble mission of the true poet consists in phrasing the vision beautiful of that higher unity, the unity of consciousness." In summarizing thus his conception of poetic art, Immermann had in mind three essential limitations of the imaginative faculties : —

First : There must exist a unity in the conscious life of the environment of the poet.

Second : The consciousness of the poet must respond sympathetically to this conscious life in order to realize its unity.

Third: The form of his vision must be suggested by and accord with phenomena of life which determine the conscious life of his contemporaries.

These views Immermann considered antithetical to those of Goethe or Schiller and necessary qualifications of the romantic doctrine. The unity of human consciousness may be a metaphysical reality, thus he argued, but cannot be an immediate poetic reality. The variety of its expression is too great, and the possibilities of its future manifestations are too far beyond the range of our present vision. We may postulate a unity of human consciousness as an idea; we cannot conceive it as an objective fact. Therefore he insisted that the poet should return to the realities of his present. If there is a unity of consciousness therein, it will inspire him and the form of his poetic vision will be germane to the consciousness of his day. Possessing this form, — which Immermann called "inner" form, — his vision will be invested with the authority of objective truth.

It is perhaps worth while to quote one of his definitions, of a historical tragedy, inasmuch as it shows just wherein Immermann differed from Grillparzer. "A historical tragedy," he wrote, "originates and can originate only when the imagination of the poet lays hold of a historic theme that still is history for his people; when the poet is inspired by events that still find an echo in the joys and griefs of the present, in its thought and feeling, its complications and failings." Grillparzer invested facts of history with modern consciousness; in other words, with a consciousness quite alien to the times when these facts occurred. The form and the conscious content of his dramatic vision, *e.g.* in *Sappho*, were not inherently harmonious; the harmony of both was artificial, not organic. Immermann contended that this discrepancy is a vital fault.

That the rational formulation of this principle by no means meant its intuitive application in creative works, Immermann was not slow to perceive. His own poetry, he knew, was merely an attempt to approach the ideal. For his part, he believed that neither he nor any other writer might realize it,

until German life showed that unity of consciousness which he held to be the prime requisite of genuine poetry. In his estimation the absence of a healthy and wholesome public life was too favorable to poetic seclusion, and made it practically impossible for the imagination to visualize the potential unity of individual aspirations. Some day this unity would manifest itself and inspire poetic imagination. And this abiding faith in regenerative forces, busily weaving in the subconsciousness of the nation the fabric of its future conscious organization and communal life, was the great redeeming feature of Immermann's literary work. He had his moments of doubt and disappointment, when his democratic ideal seemed a useless fancy, but these moments only helped in the end to clarify and strengthen his optimism.

Immermann was born in Magdeburg (1796), where his father held a prominent position in the Prussian civil service. Frederick the Great was the ideal hero of his home. In this home the past glory of Prussia still shed its lustre over the present, and here his boyish love for his narrower fatherland waxed strong in the thought that his country was strong. Then came the French invasion. In the years of French occupation, Immermann grew to young manhood, and his love of country deepened and broadened. Twice he enlisted during the uprising against Napoleon. The first time illness cut short his generous service; the second time he entered Paris with the victorious allies. Mustered out at the close of the war, he returned to the University of Halle to continue his interrupted studies of jurisprudence. Here he launched his spirited denunciation of the excesses of the Teutonia, a student organization formed to foster the spirit of patriotism and the ideals of German unity. He became responsible for the suppression of this organization by royal edict. Unfortunately, this incident seemed to range Immermann on the side of the reactionists. At the national convention of German student organizations (Burschenschaften), held at the Wartburg to celebrate the tricentennial of Luther's declaration of rights, he was proclaimed a traitor to the cause of German unity and a foe to liberal ideas.

This ostracism accounts in part for his pessimistic estimate of contemporary life and for the speculative turn of his imagination. Prone to excesses though these affiliated student unions were and given to fanciful crotchets, they were yet an objective manifestation of those ideals which had inspired the wars. They were the real nucleus of that organized public spirit which finally achieved civic emancipation. The estrangement of Immermann from their circle made it difficult for him to appreciate this fact and left him groping in the dark, when otherwise he might have recognized the flicker of sturdy public spirit in the later agitations of men who had not stood aloof. Unhappily, also, Immermann was distracted by his relation to Frau von Lützow, the Countess Ahlefeldt, which began shortly after he left the university, and continued to within a year of his death. This distraction made it still more difficult for him to put his poetic theory into poetic practice.

From first to last, Immermann produced no really great poetry. All his works were more or less devoid of artistic perspective. He was unable to gain a point of vantage whence he could overlook the panorama of contemporary life. Ever in the midst of it, journeying along its highways and byways, observing its changing features, feeling in his own heart the same restless throb that pulsed in each of its activities, he searched for the great common meaning of its varied phenomena, and found it only in the last year of his life. It was then too late to phrase it in harmonious visions. His was the gift of generous social instincts, but the faculty of being social was paralyzed by his alienation from men who represented the vital impulses of the nation, and by his association with Frau von Lützow, which after all is said in extenuation of its private nature, intruded itself between the poet and the world. He wrote his *Journal of Travels*, with its fictitious adventures, to compensate himself for that which he constantly missed in his actual experiences, — living touch with his generation. His soul craved comradeship with the great soul of current life, but his personal experiences did not bring him into full contact with this soul. And so he pictured himself participating in fancied incidents in

which he came up to the standard of his wishes. He created, to use his own words, "an ideal Immermann."

What Immermann might have accomplished as a poet, had his intercourse with men been less restricted, one may infer from the greater warmth and spontaneity of his writings in the last year of his life, immediately following the discontinuance of his relations with Frau von Lützow and coincident with the establishment of a home with the woman he loved. The love scenes of his novel *Münchhausen* and the unfinished epic *Tristan and Isolde* showed not only a greater freedom of poetic imagination, but a directness of poetic purpose that proclaimed him for the first time master of his material.

Nor is this quite all. Just as Immermann's principle of art accepted the romantic theory but ran counter to the romantic practice, so *Tristan and Isolde* was in its way a romantic theme, but it was conceived and treated by Immermann quite at variance with methods pursued by the romanticists. Even Tieck could not understand why Immermann refused to follow in the footsteps of Godfrey of Strassburg, and continue the love-intrigues of Tristan and Isolde after the ordeal had established their innocence. But the moral consciousness of Immermann would not permit the poet to consider the story as an interesting literary monument. He saw in it a symbol of love, and he felt that to be a true symbol it ought to accord with the moral ideas of his countrymen. In the version which Immermann gave to the story the force of the love-philtre is broken by the ordeal. Isolde regains control of herself, rises superior to unreasoning passion, and attains to the courage of resignation.

A similar conception of love is disclosed in the love scenes of the novel *Münchhausen*. Few novelists have treated love as it was here treated by Immermann. He was inspired by the thought that love is most free when it becomes the sublimated expression of the social instinct, and most victorious when the consciousness of its social nature supplants the rule of individual passion. At last the poet had come into living touch with German life. But at the moment when the

problematical in his relations to life seemed about to give way to simple directness, death intervened. The epic of the civic rebirth of Germany was not to be written by Immermann.

The magnificent outburst of public spirit in which Immermann had participated, the glorious sight of a people manifesting its will in action, and the mighty significance of this united willing opened his mind to the reality of democratic ideals and to the power of self-regeneration latent in collective life. But the utter impotence of the German people in the following years when Metternich controlled their destinies, and the isolation of Immermann from the circles where civic enthusiasm still asserted its sway, kept him surrounded by a haze of aristocratic traditions. He could not deny the presence in collective life of the elements of progress, but he felt that these elements were inert by reason of their diffusion, and that they could become active agencies only when concentrated. Concentration, however, seemed to him possible only in a supremely great individual—a man in whom the positive forces of life were centralized. This aristocratic modification of his democratic ideal brought Immermann within the sphere of Goethe's influence, and made him untrue in practice to his theory of poetic procedure. He could say of himself: "The spirit of history is revealed to me only in great men, and nothing but the contemplation of such an one can disclose to me the significant content of an age. But we Germans have no such great man to-day, nor have we had one since the days of Frederick." Immermann's projected cycle of Hohenstaufen tragedies, of which only *Frederick II* was completed, originated in this peculiar, and yet so natural, confusion of ideas.

It is, however, to be noted that Immermann's view of individual greatness was radically at variance with Grillparzer's, Lenau's, or Grabbe's. His great man was not a divinely endowed being thrust upon an age by fostering providence, to inspire that age with his personal ideals and lift it from its low level to the unsuspected heights of his own volition. Immermann conceived the heroic type of manhood as the organic product of an age, as a being endowed with more than ordinary

energies, but deriving his ideals from intimate association with this age. Such an one his day had not brought forth. And yet the ideals were there, germinating beneath the surface, swelling in the hearts of the people, but hidden away from the vision of the poet. That was the thought which haunted him for the best part of his life, and made his novel, *The Epigoni*, the faithful record of a generation bewildered by the enigma of its own volition.

Goethe's *William Meister* had brought the story of a youth "apprenticed to life," and passing his novitiate in the school of its diverse experiences, where he learns the lesson of rational manhood through contact with the empiric facts of society. The weight of the argument rested on the assimilation into individual character of the essential values of life, until the individual stands self-centred and self-sufficient—the human god come to his own.

The literary form of Goethe's novelistic study served without any doubt as the model for Immermann's *Epigoni*. When Immermann conceived the idea of writing this novel, also the central thought of *William Meister* appealed to his fancy and reason. Indeed, it probably had not a little to do in shaping his views of social forces centralized in great men.

At the same time Immermann was tending away from Goethe. At first this deviation was so imperceptible that he was unaware of its existence. But gradually the suspicion grew in him that in *The Epigoni* he was seeking an ideal which was not covered by Goethe's *William Meister*. Before the novel was finished Immermann recognized that his undertaking had all along pointed in a different direction. Characters, incidents, situations, appear in *The Epigoni* with which the reader of *William Meister* is familiar. The original scheme—a youth of sensitive nature endeavoring to secure through personal contact a rational appreciation of his social environment—is likewise sufficiently reminiscent of Goethe's theme. Yet Immermann trod on different ground than Goethe, and the atmosphere of his novel was distinct from that of its literary model.

The successive changes in the title, as the novel grew under Immermann's hands, imply the gradual shifting of the argument from the lines suggested by Goethe's work. The first title, *The Wanderings of Herman*, indicates the close relation between the first intentions of Immermann and those of Goethe in *William Meister*. When Immermann became conscious that it was not so much his purpose to portray the development of individual character as to depict the character of the environment of his wanderer, *i.e.* to set forth the true inwardness of contemporary life, he chose a new title, *The Contemporaries*. But the inability of Immermann to recognize in the disintegration of old forms the operation of a constructive force which was laying the foundation for a new civic order again changed the title to *The Epigoni*, *i.e.* men born too late to understand the meaning of their times—the Rip Van Winkles of Germany. The atmosphere of the novel is pregnant with an indefinable something that confounds inherited ideas of right and wrong and defies all effort to readjust human energies to its unknown demands. We are transported into a time when the misanthropist and pessimist, the man who hopes for nothing and strives for nothing, finds happiness and contentment—into a time when the optimist becomes a pessimist, and the seeker after truth a fatalist. Throughout the novel there prevails the consciousness of some mysterious force demanding recognition, yet never recognized; the sense of a present intangible reality, superseding as an idea that which is, and summoning men to comprehend its essence and endow it with phenomenal existence.

Both in form and content *The Epigoni* was a characteristic product of the second and third decades of German literature. Often beautiful in the finish of its detail, it is unsymmetric in the composition of the whole; pessimistic in its thought, there is an abiding hopefulness in its sentiment. The words of Flämmchen, as she listens to the heartbeat of the unconscious hero, epitomize best what Immermann felt as he wrote the story and what the story itself conveys as its most enduring impression: "If one just happens to listen casually, that sounds

like, 'Past! Past! Past!' But if one hearkens more closely, its beat says, 'Anew! Anew! Anew!'" Looking back upon that which was both cause and content of his novel, Immermann declared it to be the thought "that no disruption, however fearful, can destroy the regenerative powers slumbering in an age." That is the hopefulness of the book, its great democratic optimism, even though the hope is vague and formless, and the redeeming forces of democracy do not take shape.

Whether the novel be a picture of "the conflict of decadent aristocracy with nascent industrialism," or "of the lethargic slumber of national energies consequent upon extreme momentary exaltation," it matters in the end very little. The picture could have no perspective, unless he who drew it felt the poetic significance of the regenerative powers of public life and inspired thereby could rise above the plane of his immediate present and see in the sum total of its phenomena the revelation of its constructive idea. But it was precisely the poetic significance of civic unrest throughout Germany that so long failed to take full and lasting possession of Immermann. He was right in refraining from putting his poetic gifts in the service of the practical solution of civic problems; he was not right in assuming that the idea of civic freedom was merely a rational concept and not a poetic reality.

This wavering poetic appreciation of mass-ideals is to be held responsible, not only for the unintentionally episodic character of *The Epigoni*, but also for the curious inconsistency of purpose that shows itself in other works of Immermann of the same period. In the first version of the poem, *The Grave on St. Helena*, Napoleon appears as the incarnation of benevolent despotism and of the maxim: Everything for the people, nothing through the people. In the second version (1828) he becomes the embodiment of French national consciousness, the Frederick Barbarossa of France. Again, somewhat later, in *The Tragedy in the Tyrol*, he is a curious combination of despot and popular leader, with some suggestion of the final valuation which Immermann put upon his character: Napoleon, the per-

sonified negation of revolution, the destroyer of worthless and shallow conditions, but himself without positive ideals of truth and progress. Or let us take another example. Compare the first version of *The Tragedy in the Tyrol* (1827) with the second, *Andreas Hofer* (1833). In the first we meet with the thought that popular enthusiasm may produce momentary successes, never lasting results; in the second we observe an attempt to open a vista into the enduring value of democratic enthusiasm. Immermann's trilogy, *Alexis*, offers still another example. He began it with keen sympathy for Alexis, the youthful leader of the uprising against Peter the Great and his benevolent despotism; but when the results of the Paris July revolution shook his new faith in popular initiative, he transformed the close of his unfinished trilogy into a warm defence of the same Peter. Such shifting may show an earnest, warm-hearted effort to comprehend the new law of civic progress for which Europe waited and suffered, but it likewise proves that Immermann too was waiting to behold the fruit of this travail, and that the new life to be born was not yet foreseen by him with the prophetic eye of the poet.

It is not strange that in the first few years following the French July revolution (1830), Immermann became sceptical of the effective value of democratic agencies. That uprising he had greeted as a "modern wonder," comparable only to the Reformation. Within a year events had shorn his "wonder" of all its greatness and glory. Immermann gave up the attempt to read the riddle of contemporary life, and into the place it had so long occupied in his thought and imagination stole the greater riddle of human life, the problem of good and evil. *The Epigoni* was laid aside and *Merlin* was written. Immermann succumbed to the influences that made and unmade the poetry of Grillparzer, Lenau, and Grabbe.

The tragedy of *Merlin* revolved about an insoluble mystery. It could not be a great drama. Unduly overshadowed in German literature by Goethe's *Faust*, it yet deserved a better fate than to be treated as a mere imitation. The longing for the full realization of the divinity of man touched Immermann's

Merlin with a significance quite its own. Basing himself on the Old English myth of the magician Merlin, the poet developed his own Faust-theme. For Merlin, conceived of Satan and born of a virgin, represents in this tragedy human perfection in contrast to divine perfection incarnate in the Son of God. The misery of human existence, with its inevitable extinction of all things perfect because they are perfect, *i.e.* perfected, its possibilities of reverence without piety, of unhappiness without sin, and retribution without guilt — this misery Immermann sought to present in the tragedy of *Merlin*. Under the pressure of intolerable conditions men of large hearts and humane thoughts were growing sceptical, not of Christianity, but of the Christian dogma as formulated by the church. It was the age that bore a David Frederick Strauss and that refused to be comforted by the assurance that the glory of a personal God is the all-sufficient cause and purpose of life. And so the religious scepticism of Strauss's *Life of Jesus* had its poetic analogue in Lenau's *Faust*, Grabbe's *Faust and Don Juan*, and Immermann's *Merlin*.

However, a poet of Immermann's realistic temperament could not tarry long in the misty realms of metaphysical abstractions. Irresistibly he was drawn earthward again to that which was perhaps more ephemeral, but less formless. And like many another, he approached the contradictions that had sent his baffled imagination roaming beyond space and time from the comic side. It is true that the humor of the epic *Tulifäntchen* was rather forced and the satire of the poem shot through with pessimism, but even so this humor had its saving grace. "Tulifäntchen" (*i.e.* a fluffy child's dress) was, as the title of the poem implies, a quizzical parody of modern life. It was the aimless, meaningless, thoughtless side of collective living that Immermann travestied in the person of Don Tulifäntchen, small of stature and small of soul. In the pettiness of his adventures the poet mirrored the pettiness of contemporary woes and contemporary ideals. The original intentions of Immermann contemplated a tragic finale, but as he advanced with his tale, he made the discovery that his work had blunted the

edge of his pessimism. He closed his poem with a note of mocking raillery.

The fanciful premises once conceded, *Tulifäntchen* is not without its poetic merits; but intended as a satire, it hardly rose above the level of caricature. Human society may be a vanity fair to the pessimistic humorist, as it is naught but purposeful activity to the complacent optimist. To the satirist it is both, and both at the same time. That view of life Immermann had not yet acquired, nor indeed was he ever to acquire it in the perfect unison of its parts. However, *Tulifäntchen* marked the beginning of a new period in the poetic career of Immermann,—a period that closed with *Tristan and Isolde*, already discussed, that enriched critical literature of Germany by a most sympathetic and temperate study of its civic life during the first decades of the century (Immermann's *Memoirs*), and that produced the work by which he is best known and best beloved,—*Münchhausen, A Story in Arabesques*.

The story of Baron Münchhausen had become through Bürger's edition a favorite chap-book of the German people. The person of Münchhausen, as he appeared in those tales, seemed to the author of *Tulifäntchen* to hit off the follies of contemporary aristocracy and its effete principle of caste. Again the unproductive side of modern life was the theme with which Immermann was concerned. His new novel was designed as a parody of *ancien régime*. But this one-sided picture of life could not for any length of time satisfy the artistic instincts of Immermann. The old craving for a positive vision returned. Neither Goldsmith, Fielding, and Swift, nor German humorists and satirists had revealed to him the true nature of satire. He now learned it from Aristophanes, the Greek satirist. Happily the comedies of Aristophanes fell into Immermann's hands at a time when he could best appreciate the blending of parody and salient truth, and when the consciousness of the constructive forces in German life once more began to range itself alongside of that of its destructive forces.

How close a student of his environment Immermann had heretofore been was now signally brought to light. The

industrial problem, which had confounded Immermann in the period of *The Epigoni*, was of minor importance to the author of *Münchhausen*. In the closing chapters, or rather letters, of *The Epigoni* there were not wanting indications that Immermann was realizing the nature of the civic problem, the solution of which was a condition precedent to any solution of impending industrial problems. The tiller of the soil there found his champion against the industrial laborer. If anything, Immermann had been too far-sighted as a poet. He had overlooked immediate civic needs. Now there came to him the thought that among these tillers of the soil the redemptive force of German civic life must be sought, and that in the peasantry of the fatherland its constructive energies were active. The thought, however, would have availed him little had it not sprung from his intimate knowledge of Westphalian peasant life, — its activities, sentiments, and customs. The picture of this life stood out in clear contrast to that other picture — the picture of aristocratic decadence. A new light fell on it, and the glory of its ideal meaning was seen by the poet.

In the interpolated episode *Der Oberhof* we have this poetic vision of German peasantry, supremely real and supremely ideal. So true to the actuality that it might serve the student as a document of research, the story reveals that which no learning can impart, — the ideality of its source. Immermann was right when he insisted that this episode should be considered as an integral part of his whole novel, but his readers have also been right in singling it out from the mass of banter, ridicule, and irony amidst which it was placed. It is a gem of purest water, perfectly cut and polished, but the deep ruby lustre in its heart blazes only as the sidelights from *Münchhausen* refract themselves therein. Unfortunately, the converse is not true. *Münchhausen* proper is not a gem. The sheen from the *Oberhof* falls on its surface, but does not glow in its heart. Each of the two elements of poetic satire produced its own result, rather than both in unison a common result. *Münchhausen* as a novel has no perspective, and its episode, the *Oberhof*, forfeits its perspective if detached from the whole.

Immermann appreciated the disparate and loose nature of his composition when he felt the full inspiration of his constructive theme of peasant life. It was too late to change the work done on *Münchhausen*, though not too late to indicate the point where the pessimistic and optimistic lines of its two parts were to meet. The love and marriage of Lisbeth and Oscar symbolize the victory of a new civic ideal over the old principle of caste. Lisbeth, a descendant of the Münchenhausen family, transplanted like the wonder-flower that Oscar plucks from the mould of a decaying tree trunk into the rich and wholesome soil of peasant life, grows up into strong and vigorous womanhood. Aristocracy and peasantry are assimilated in her, and her union with Oscar represents the final union of all three castes—aristocrats, burghers, and peasants. It is here that the new influences in the life of Immermann, which determined his conception of the Tristan legend, first bore fruit. "My intentions were," says Immermann, "to chronicle a story of love up to that point where its influence begins to make a man ripe, mature, and active for home and country, for the interests of his time and generation."

Such was Charles Leberecht Immermann, not in his actual attainments a great poet, since death cut short his career at the threshold of greatness, but a poet of sterling sincerity and genuine democratic instincts. Impatient to see the people working out their own salvation, he was often swayed from the straight path of these instincts by mistakes and follies of the popular will or by the inertia of the demos. But to this path he continually returned, and it led him finally to the point which gave him a truer perspective of contemporary life and opened a wider prospect into the future.

What poetic vision of present and future would have been vouchsafed him had he lived, no one can tell beyond this: that the message of the vision which faded with death would have been the message of his whole previous life as it lies before us and a message that Germany could ill spare. For it would have read: You cannot reform a people, for a people reforms itself. You cannot thrust greatness on a people, for greatness develops from

within. You cannot unite a people, for its permanent unity is of spontaneous growth. You cannot free a people through institutions, for a people frees itself and its institutions are the expression of its freedom. You cannot define the nature of its government, for a people defines it for itself. You cannot save a people, for in trying to do so you pervert the only true powers that do their subtle work in the hearts of the populace. All this you cannot do. You may attempt it, but your reform, your greatness, your unity, your freedom, your government, your salvation — they will be yours, not the abiding, indestructible, self-perpetuating products of the nominal possessors. Rouse the latent powers, you may; strengthen them, you may; speed them on their mission, you may. But no more. Therefore Immermann was so unrelenting in his opposition to Hegel and Hegel's doctrine of state, therefore also he conceived such a strong aversion, mistaken in part, to the South German Liberals and the "political" poets of his day, the so-called Young Germans.

It is not to be denied that the views which Immermann entertained were theoretically compatible with the principles underlying the Hegelian system and expounded in the political agitations of the Young Germans. A clearer definition of democratic freedom was as much the aim of Hegel and the Young Germans as it was of Immermann. But starting with the maxim, "What is reasonable that is real and what is real that is reasonable," Hegel developed its second member at the expense of the first. One may concede that it was not his intention to justify government absolutism, as one must admit that his system was built upon a broad democratic conception of the origin of government. None the less it cannot be gainsaid that in assuming existing customs to be the projection into reality of collective ideals, Hegel elaborated a system which not only could be and was interpreted as justifying the retention in Germany of the monarchical principle of state, but was actually so considered by its elaborator.

The new direction given to philosophic reasoning by Hegel's analysis of human freedom is, of course, to be acknowledged.

Still the identification of his abstract idea of state with the Prussian idea of monarchy, however much it put this monarchy theoretically in the service of the people and made it theoretically a creation of the people, kept the populace in the old treadmill. His effort to harmonize authority and freedom, society and the individual, brought him to the point where he conceived the "state" as the realization of the moral idea, as an end in itself sustained immediately by custom, mediately by individual consciousness. Freedom becomes reality in the state and by that sign the state in turn the paramount reality. Overlooking the fact that "custom" as a product of collective consciousness always lags behind the progressive development of ethical society and cannot be the absolute determinant of the present or future ideals of society, Hegel laid himself open to the criticism of confounding the idea of state with the idea of government.

And just here the views of Immermann and of Hegel parted company. Immermann could not concede the absolute authority of custom nor accept as reasonable any "fixed" idea of state. He insisted that since the state was the crystallization of social ethics, it could not be made the norm for social ethics, and that, therefore, it was not the function of government to propagate dogmatic ideas of civic progress, but rather the function of civic progress to realize its civic ideas in the organization of the state, *i.e.* in the government. With Hegel, the philosophical spokesman of the Restoration, Immermann could have no sympathy.

It is, however, to be observed that the Hegelian maxim and the Hegelian system lent itself equally well to the support of radicalism. A shifting of the emphasis from the second member of Hegel's maxim to the first could make his whole system justify the contentions of radical thinkers. "What is reasonable is real," then what is unreasonable is unreal and has as such no right to exist. And what could be more unreasonable than the attitude of German governments of the Metternich type, what less the expression of great national ideals, what further removed from the moral sentiment of the German

people! Therefore, still following the dialectical method of Hegel, the first step toward freedom could only be taken by instituting a form of government that recognized the true nature of German social morality and smoothed the way for civic progress. A constitutional monarchy paired with representative government, — this was the other deduction to be drawn by applying the Hegelian system to contemporary issues.

With this argument Immermann had even less sympathy. Political reforms ought, so he thought, to develop from within the people and not be thrust upon the people by a few enthusiastic doctrinaires. Civic morality ought to change the structure of governments, not a change of this structure dictated by philosophic reasoning to attempt dissemination of civic morality. So it happened that Immermann discarded the monarchical application of the Hegelian system and likewise the republican application which the "Young Germans" favored.

The so-called Young German movement was in its inception purely political. The promise of constitutional reforms, which German princes had given under the stress of a national catastrophe, had thus far not been fulfilled. Toward Prussia the eyes of South Germany were turned expectantly, as the only state strong enough to make a stand against the reactionary policy of Austria. For Prussia was openly committed, by royal promise, to a representative form of government. In the first decade subsequent to the freeing of Germany from French control, the great cry had been for political unity. Jahn, with his associations of "turners," and the "Burschenschaften" (student associations), with their colors — Black-Red-Gold — continued to dream the dream of an imperial Germany, until this dream became a nightmare to the rulers, and they summarily dispelled it by suppressing patriotic organizations. Through this action the dreamers were ruthlessly shaken from their dreams, but they were also shaken into life.

When the patriotic student organizations dissolved, there was sung Binzer's pathetic song, vaguely hopeful and pitifully uncertain : —

Now rent is the ribbon of black, red, and gold :
Why God should permit it can never be told.

closing with the lines, —

Let the edifice crumble, we feel no dismay :
The spirit lives in us, and God is our stay.

In the following years it was gradually borne in upon the great body of patriotic young men, balked in their enthusiasm, that vague and mystical confidence in the Divinity could not change the facts of life, and that national unification depended on the action of those who sympathized with it. These sympathizers were the populace, and through them must come the realization of the national idea. The demand for civic reforms began to take shape, and the idea of a representative form of government found lodgement in circles where before it had not been considered seriously. From these circles the ranks of the Young Germans were recruited.

But the civic movement represented by the Young Germans was not wholly subservient to the idea of national unity. It had its cosmopolitan aspect. It stood for the dignity of manhood conserved by civic responsibility and greater individual freedom. And here, too, the shortsightedness of government dictation produced the very result which edicts and police supervision were intended to prevent. As early as 1808, Ludwig Börne, later the first leader in the literary movement of Young Germany, published a pamphlet entitled, *Life and Science*. His contention, briefly stated, was this: "All perception of truth is destined to become reality in life, and every reality of life to become the object of scientific consideration." The desire for this reciprocal relation between life and learning, with its demand for vitalized scholarship and its greater love of the actualities, was one of the characteristic signs of the new century. The popularization of science by men like Alexander von Humboldt, Helmholtz, Dubois-Reymond, Liebig, went hand in hand with an ever enlarging interest in current events. The daily journals began to crowd out the old "almanacs," monthlies, and weeklies. In the van of modern journal-

ism stood Cotta, the classical publisher of Germany; and Cotta was the mainstay of the Young Germans.

This increasing demand for coördination of abstract learning and the concrete facts of daily life explains to no small degree the extraordinary influence exerted by Pestalozzi on the common school education in Germany. However, the spheres of learning which Börne had in mind were the gymnasia and universities, where new-humanism, with its disregard of contemporary values, was to all appearances firmly established. The patriotic movement preceding the wars with Napoleon had modified somewhat the aristocratic principle of higher education, and men like Wilhelm von Humboldt had endeavored to institute reforms. But the democratic spirit which thereby invaded the precincts of gymnasia and universities accorded ill with the later reactionary policy. It was frowned upon, and institutions of learning were subjected to police supervision, which culminated in the sweeping prohibition: that no subject of study was to be considered or taught with reference to contemporary life. Scholarship was thus devitalized and shorn of its human significance for the student. This process of starvation could have only two results,—either total indifference to the practical needs of civic life, or, when the youth went out into the great world of modern thought and unknown activities, greedy and inconsiderate snatching at every theory that promised a cure for all the troubles which assailed him in society.

In 1817 Börne was still conservative in temper. Prussia, with its Hardenberg, Stein, Humboldt, and Boyen, appeared to him, as it did to all German liberals, as the hope of Germany, and he could reply to the invitation of Cotta, requesting him to participate in a contemplated ministerial paper, somewhat as follows:—

“It is a most alarming practice, now grown into custom, to place the populace not in a position which discriminates between it and the government, but in a position which opposes it to the government, and to persuade it that no political atmosphere can agree with its well-being in which the thermometer of its loyalty has not reached zero. Far better would it be to demonstrate to the populace how the minimum of submissiveness leads as surely to despotism as the maximum.

In 1818 his two publications, *Die Wage* (The Scales) and *Die Zeitschwinge* (The Pinion of the Times), were suppressed. In 1819 he was the Paris correspondent of Cotta. But in 1821 he still carried himself with the idea of vitalizing abstract book-learning by treating Goethe, Schiller, Jean Paul, Lessing, and other German writers, as well as Virgil, Aristophanes, and ancient poets and thinkers, in their relation to modern life. And this man became, under the pressure of the reaction, the most passionate and embittered political adversary of the government, — an ultra-republican partisan. By his methods of evading the literary censors he created a new literary style, and became the literary hero of young, aspiring, and restless youths. Unfortunately, for the same reasons, he prostituted German poetry to political ends.

Börne was a typical product of his day, and for that reason found such a large following among the young men of Germany. Their erudition had not taught them to apply the lessons of history and literature to conditions of modern life. The student world of abstract ideas and the civic world of concrete facts, into which they stepped from the halls of learning, seemed to exclude each other. With the fervor of youth they protested. Enthusiasm reached high-water mark at the popular rallies and mass meetings held at Gaibach, Hanau, Hambach, and other towns of South Germany during the summer of 1832. But this enthusiasm and the resultant manifestoes were, as a rule, as aimless and harmless as the Wartburg meet of German students fifteen years before. Further meetings were forbidden by the authorities, and the pent-up resentment vented itself in pamphlets, assumed the guise of poetry, and swelled the tide of political literature.

And still another, more selfish, but not less potent, motive sent many to join the ranks of the young enthusiasts for democratic liberties. The Napoleonic reign was sufficiently a matter of the past to permit a more candid estimate of its good qualities, and foremost among these was the recognition of the merit-system. Birth, precedence, influence, religious professions — they all had counted for naught when weighed in the balance

against personal merit. Willibald Alexis (W. Häring), the glorifier of Prussian ideals, though he stood outside the movement, let an invalided Prussian major exclaim : —

“Why has Bonaparte become a great general, why has he about him a staff of competent officers? Because he is not a stickler for seniority, because he picks out efficient men where he finds them, because he makes advancements on the field of battle as he sees fit. In that army there is salt that has not lost its savor, there is blood in it; he cares little for religious professions and precedent and musty claims. Everybody has a chance to become a general and more too if he does his duty or a bit more. If such methods do not make good soldiers, I should like to know what will. Out of the way with the stiff and the aged, away with them to military depôts and to the baggage-train! Bring on your young men!”

Merit was now recognized as the salient principle not merely of the military code of Napoleon, but of his civic code as well. It gave an equal chance to high and low, to Jew and Christian, to aristocrat, burgher, and peasant. But the régime of Metternich had resurrected the dead. Caste outstripped merit, favoritism superseded ability, beaurocracy reigned supreme, governments put on the robes of the church, and the Jew fell back into the circles of the social outcasts. The path of honest ambition was blocked. And the result? Muttering and invective suppressed by gag-law and imprisonment or exile, and thereafter — recruits for the Young Germans.

Thus the reaction welded the liberal elements into something like a political party. Its leaders came largely from South Germany, for South Germany was the hotbed of liberalism. Here liberalism was democratic, having its source in popular sentiment. In North Germany, especially in Prussia, liberal ideas were of academic conception, primarily cherished by a few thoughtful men like Varnhagen von Ense or Wilhelm von Humboldt. North German liberalism was therefore aristocratic and didactic. South German liberalism was poetic in its temper, North German liberalism prosaic, and this dual character is stamped on the entire literary product of Young Germany.

The literary movement with which Börne, Mundt, Wienbarg, Kühne, Gutzkow, Laube, Heine, and so many others were identified, was therefore in reality most complex. The one point in which its aims and motives were focussed was opposition to a form of government that had stultified the best instincts of the German people. Other than that it had no well-defined common purposes or ideals. The most curious contrasts, therefore, face the student who can imagine himself in the centre of that gyrating circle, — nationalism and cosmopolitanism, civic morality and individual license, genuine piety and baldest cynicism, sturdy optimism and rankest pessimism, spirituality and worldliness, politics in the service of poetry and poetry in the service of politics. Happily, perhaps unhappily for the student who attempts the task of condensing his impressions, these whirling contrasts gradually blend before his gaze. The dizzy rotation forms into a ribbon of scintillating colors — the works of Heinrich Heine.

CHAPTER VIII

DEMOCRACY ARRAYED AGAINST ARISTOCRACY

HEINRICH HEINE

“As I was born to heap eternal ridicule on all that is worthless, gone to seed, absurd, false, and farcical, so it is but a trait of my nature to feel that which is sublime, to admire that which is majestic, and to glorify that which has life.” Criticise Heine as we may, these his words give the key-note to his character as man and poet.

Out of mere love of destruction Heine was not destructive. He was not a child gleefully tumbling down the house of cards built by nurse or governess. Yes—he enjoyed combat! He could chuckle, often with sardonic glee, as the dry bones of German pedants rattled in the sack he shook. Many a ringing laugh burst from his lips when the aristocratic inmates of a flimsy government structure warned him away from their precious fabric. Yet he fought not for the mere lust of strife nor destroyed with the heedless enjoyment of a child. Too often that view of Heine has been taken. It is a cheap and easy solution of the intricate problem that his life and works present. Superficially justified by the destructive irony that trails so boldly through his writings, it garbs a facile lie in the robes of critical truth. The irony of Heine fell thick as hail, for the crop of worthless ideas grew rank throughout Germany. It struck its blows relentlessly and fiercely, for the weeds it thrashed to the ground as relentlessly choked the good seed implanted therein. It came like a revel of destruction, for the forms it attacked were the forms of hollow sham and make-believe superiority.

Heine was not constructive in the sense that he sought to set his own little plants in the hail-swept field. But to draw the

inference that his talent, if not his genius, was merely destructive is puerile logic. Heine felt that the seed of progress was germinating in the soil of his country. It needed the sunlight, it needed the fresh air. In a large way he not only gave sunlight and air access to the mother soil, but brought sunlight and the breezes of spring in his poetry. A party man Heine was not. He poured his withering sarcasm over monarchical institutions and often dropped from the vials of his irony burning acid on republican cure-alls. Heine was a democrat, not always the most noble in his methods of manifesting it nor indeed most practical in his empiric democracy, but for all that most consistent, and in the consistency of his democracy the inconsistencies of all he did and wrote find their ultimate unity.

Heine was borne in Catholic Germany (Düsseldorf o/R), December 13, 1799 (1797?). Young enough to be dazzled by the splendors of the Napoleonic régime, he was old enough to appreciate the emancipation which this régime brought to his race. Heine was a Jew. Three years (1816-1819) were spent at Hamburg in a vain effort to 'accommodate himself to the wishes of his wealthy uncle, Solomon Heine. But Harry Heine was not born to become a captain of industry or commerce. Unrequited love for Molly, the youngest daughter of Solomon Heine, called forth his first lyrics of love. In these, as in his later erotic poems, he objectivized passion as few German poets have succeeded in doing, and yet he never sacrificed that subtle subjectivity of the primary affect which most commonly phrases itself in musical harmonies.

When Heine left Hamburg to study law at Bonn and later at Goettingen, he took with him also the hatred of a young man for philistinism. The predominating mercantile spirit at the great seaport had aroused his ire against everything that smacked of partisanship, clannishness, pedantry, and bigotry. His juridical studies at Bonn and Goettingen naturally suffered. The lectures of A. W. Schlegel and E. M. Arndt, then at Bonn, and intercourse with Karl Simrock, the great student of Germanic antiquities, interested him more than the Pandects

of Justinian. Why he left Bonn for Goettingen is not quite clear, unless he resented the inquisitorial attitude of the government toward the student body at Bonn. When his studies at Goettingen were cut short in consequence of a student duel, he turned toward Berlin (1821). Here he was welcomed to the circle of Chamisso, Fouqué, and Hoffmann, and to the salon of Rachel, the brilliant wife of Varnhagen von Ense. Here too Hegel cast the spell of his philosophy over Heine.

In the first year of his stay Heine published the first collection of his poems, which won him instant recognition. This publication was followed in 1823 by the publication of his two tragedies, *Almansor* and *Ratcliff* in combination with a *Lyrical Interlude*. Both tragedies met with just disapproval. After a short stay at Cuxhaven, where the spirits of the vast deep first rose before his enchanted gaze, he again took up the study of law at Goettingen, this time with sufficient application to receive his degree (1825), but not with any exclusive ardor. The great novel-fragment, *The Rabbi of Bacharach*, was written in these years, a *Faust* plan entertained, and many of his later published poems received their first tentative form.

In the summer of 1824 Heine toured the Harz Mountains on foot, concluding his trip with a most disappointing visit to Goethe in Weimar. The poetic impressions of this tramp later irradiated his polemic of contemporary life, *The Harztrip*. The interview with Goethe made it easier for Heine to tread the path of polemic literature. For the quiet, austere dignity of the great man, coupled as it was with the consciousness of his superiority, froze Heine's enthusiasm. What Goethe might have taught him, Heine had now to learn through long and harsh experience.

Before leaving Goettingen, Heine took a step for which he has been severely, almost viciously, criticised. He embraced the Christian faith. Under the dispensation of Metternich a Jew was excluded from government service and civic rights. The legal profession admitted none but baptized Christians. Heine was a Jew of that broad cosmopolitan type whose religion transcended sectarianism. His cynical contempt of doctrine,

whether Jewish or Christian, often makes it hard for his readers to believe in the essential religiosity of his nature. Yet Heine was religious. He changed the form of his confession as an ordinary being would change his clothing to meet the exigencies of climate or season. Winter had again set in for the Jews, and Heine wore the cloak of Christianity. Hypocrisy had no part in this act. He never pretended that this profession of Christianity was aught else but a mere form to him, as indeed it was little more than a formal requirement on the part of church and government. Every faith, whether Protestant, Roman Catholic, Jewish, Mahomedan, Ancient Greek, or what not, contained for Heine a germ of the eternal truth; none expressed the whole truth. Whether people called him Jew or Christian was of no consequence to him. He had outgrown creeds. But to be called "a dirty Jew" set his temper on edge, and therein lies the true secret of his formal acceptance of the Christian dogma. For the exigencies of his professional career, which, if the truth be told, caused him few sleepless nights, were not the controlling motive of his act. Considerations of a social character influenced him more potently than he himself knew. The subtler instinct of his nature was at work. So long had the Jew been the Pariah of Christendom, so low had he often fallen under the infamy of his lot, that the term "Jew" had come to stand for all that was filthy and sordid in life. Heine resented this exclusion of his individual existence from fellowship with his countrymen and protested against the inclusion of his personality in the category of those who had grown indifferent to the influences of culture. He craved recognition as a member of the civic order. More than that: he craved for himself an undisturbed sense of his identity with the free-masonry of civilized beings. In this resentment, protest, and craving he proved his democracy. That Heine could not keep intact his democratic consciousness without formal initiation into the society of his day, was doubtless a weakness of character. But it was an excusable weakness to be criticised least of all by those who raise and defend barriers of caste or sect.

Between the years 1826 and 1831 Heine published most of the works on which his popularity rests. Among these were *Pictures of Travel* in three parts (including the *Harztrip*), *Pictures of the Baltic*, and his celebrated *Book of Songs*. Intensely subjective these works certainly were, but their intense subjectivity was objectively conceived. It is evident that the poetic consciousness from which they emanated was saturated with the restless, troubled craving of contemporary life. Heine experienced this life, not as the negation of his personal desires, but as the negation of its own social ideals, and this fact gave to his poetry a quality not to be found in the poetry of isolation. In his poetic subjectivity were reflected the contrasts of an objective reality. They were the contrasts that his contemporaries felt and that he, too, as a child of his day, felt, though he felt them more keenly. These his poetic imagination laid hold of and fashioned into forms poetic.

During these years the interest of Heine in public life, particularly in civic affairs, grew more intense and concrete. In the second series of *Pictures of Travel*, published in 1827, more especially in the book entitled *Nordeney*, written in 1826 on the island of Nordeney in the Baltic, his irony excoriated the caste-spirit dominating German society and civic institutions. The first issue was suppressed by the censors. Heine prudently departed for England on the day of publication. Little as he gained from association with the great life of the English metropolis in the way of poetic inspiration, at least his political horizon was broadened. He returned to Germany to edit Cotta's *General Annals of Politics*, published at Munich. His *Essays on English Conditions*, written for this journal, were severely ironical, yet when one reads between the lines, one recognizes a sincere appreciation of the saving grace of democratic institutions. With a keen eye Heine perceived the absurd excrescences of insular pride, and unhesitatingly pointed to the crude contrasts that prevailed in the civic life of England. But the principle of democracy, however inadequately expounded in practice, seemed to Heine to impart to British society the power of self-correction. Therefore he could write

in one of these essays: "Notwithstanding these opposite tendencies of spiritual and material life, one discerns in the English people a unity of temperament which consists in the very fact that it feels itself as one people. Let the modern dandies and cavaliers hate and despise each other, they never cease to be Englishmen. As Englishmen they are united and consorted like plants which have sprung from the same soil and are wonderfully conjoined in this soil. Hence the secret consonance of all life and thought in England, a country which at first sight seems to offer only a spectacle of confusion and contrasts."

Cotta's *Annals of Politics* suspended publication within a year. Heine journeyed a month later to Italy, whence the illness of his father recalled him. In the third series of his *Pictures of Travel* (published 1830), to which Heine put the finishing touches in Helgoland (1829), the experiences and observations made since his return from England were woven into a semi-poetic fabric. In literary history the last book of these *Pictures of Travel*, bearing the title *The Baths of Lucca*, has become notorious for its bold attack on the poet Platen in defence of the poet Immermann. How far Heine was justified in directing his shafts of envenomed irony against Platen need not be discussed. That he overstepped the bounds of decency cannot be denied, and though he never rued the act, one cannot but regret that through it he forfeited the friendship of many well-meaning men. And Heine above all men needed sturdy friends. His later attack on Ludwig Börne overstepped the bounds of fair play in a similar manner, and both attacks went far toward lessening the influence that Heine might otherwise have exerted.

The news of the Paris July Revolution (1830) reached Heine at Helgoland, whither he had again betaken himself to find relief from chronic headaches. His *Letters from Helgoland*, published for the first time years later in his book on Ludwig Börne; his introductory remarks to the book *Kahldorf on Nobility*; and finally his *Supplements to Pictures of Travel*, published in 1831, tell the story of the awakening of Heine to the full conscious-

ness of democracy. These *Supplements* were in effect a hymn to revolution. Noteworthy is the absence of party sentiment. Heine does not glorify republican government; he does not inveigh against monarchical institutions. Not because revolution shatters old political forms, but because it frees the spirit from bondage and proclaims the right of human beings to attain equality—therefore he sounded its praises. Not because the people always formulate the best rules of government, but because government is self-corrective and self-adjusting only when it is functional—therefore he welcomed revolution as a constructive force. After summoning the monarchs of Germany to free themselves from the self-imposed fetters of the institutional church, to be free again like other men and walk among them as freemen, to feel as freemen, marry as freemen, and to express their opinions as freemen, Heine continues in one of his last chapters as follows:—

“But what is left to the aristocrats when they are deprived of the crowned means of subsistence, when kings are a possession of the people and rule honestly and secure through the will of the people, the only source of all power? What will the ‘black-coats’ do when kings begin to see that a few drops of anointing oil can render no human head guillotine-proof, just as the populace sees with each day more clearly that wafers do not sate hunger? Well, forsooth, in that case all that is left to aristocracy and clergy is confederation, cabal, and intrigue against the new order of things. . . . Vain effort! Like a flaming giantess the age strides calmly on, indifferent to the bark of snarling priestlets and squirelets.”

Such was the democracy of Heine when, in the spring of 1831, he betook himself to Paris. Only once more, for the briefest of sojourns, was he to set his foot on German soil. Bitter words they were with which Heine concluded the *Supplements to Pictures of Travel*. But his last published words before departing for France and his farewell to Germany were also the summing up of that creed which he championed so valiantly until his death:—

“Yes, I repeat the words with which I began these pages: ‘Liberty is a new religion, the religion of our age. Though Christ is not the God of this religion, yet he is a high priest thereof, and

His name sheds a beatific lustre in the hearts of the disciples. The French, however, are the chosen people of the new religion; in their language are writ its first gospels and dogmas; Paris is the new Jerusalem, and the Rhine is the Jordan which separates the Holy Land from the land of the Philistines.’”

The poetical fruits of the following years were meagre indeed. Hack work, conscientiously performed, for publishers of Shakespeare's works took much of his time, and resulted in a collection of essays, often brilliant in parts, *Shakespeare's Maidens and Matrons* (1838). Political correspondence for Cotta — for some years, to be sure, interrupted — was likewise unfavorable to poetic musings. Financial cares weighed more heavily on him since his marriage. And his wife, however devoted to his material needs, was not at all fitted, by temperament or education, to stimulate the flagging muse of the poet to new flights. The more creditable was the manliness of Heine in standing by this child of the people, with her total inability to understand, or even to desire to understand, his poetic nature. It speaks volumes for his moral courage and his essential integrity of soul.

Not until 1843 was anything of note published by the poet, though the journalist and literary critic proved his mettle in essays for Cotta and in a series of articles written for the *Revue de deux mondes* on *Germany*, and in another series for Bohain's *l'Europe litteraire* on *The Romantic School* of German poetry. *Atta Troll, A Midsummer Night's Dream*, which appeared in 1843, was, therefore, the first important poetic product of Heine's muse since his exile. It was a humorous, ironical attack on the political poetry which came into vogue in Germany with the coronation of Frederick William IV of Prussia, and which presaged the revolution of 1848. In the following year *Germany, A Winter's Tale*, was given to the press. It was, in many respects, the complement and counterpart to *Atta Troll*, and was immediately inspired by the short trip to Germany which Heine undertook in the last months of the previous year for the purpose of visiting his aged mother in Hamburg.

Detractors of Heine have conveniently disregarded the

brightest of all traits in his composite make-up — his deep and true love for his mother. For years after this visit he sent her cheerful letters from a bed of illness. She never knew from him of the excruciating agonies that her "Harry" suffered, or guessed the loving deception whereby he kept her in ignorance of his blindness. One gains a larger view of Heine and a more sympathetic insight into his real character, when one reads these letters and considers what they concealed and what they gave in place of that which they concealed.

Shortly after the return of Heine from Hamburg, a stroke of paralysis robbed him of sight in one eye and seriously affected that of the other. Spinal meningitis developed in the course of the next year. From 1848 to 1856, suffering excruciating physical tortures, the poet was confined to his room, in the last years, to his bed. In these years (1846–1851) he composed what may be regarded in many respects as the noblest work of his poetic pen, *Romancero*. Its three books, entitled respectively, *Histories*, *Lamentations*, *Hebraic Melodies*, are the great lyric trilogy of his life. Busy to the last moment with his *Memoirs*, he died a champion of the light as he saw it.

Volumes have been written on the life and works of Heine. The foregoing résumé may, however, help to determine the position which is to be assigned to Heine in German literature in the nineteenth century and the relation in which he stood to the great problems of civic progress.

What was the light Heine saw as the sun of his physical vitality approached its setting? For thirty years and more its rays had played upon the mists of his moral consciousness and irradiated his poetic visions with the uncertain sheen of a nebulous glory. Forms suddenly stand forth of gigantic stature and shrivel to commonplace at closer approach. Rosy glamour is chased by cold gray matter-of-fact. Distant harmonies fall upon the ear, then suddenly the strident crash of breakers dead ahead. But the billowing mists are all the time fading and suddenly are snatched away. The sweet light of the conquering day reveals the headlands and a sure haven. What was the conquer-

ing light? To name it is not so difficult. It was the light of Democracy. To analyze it in its victorious splendor is more difficult. To trace its gradual ascendancy in the works of the poet is the most difficult of all.

That Heine was no theorist in the narrower sense and no practical reformer, as that term usually passes current, is sufficiently demonstrated by the general facts of his life. In the larger sense, he was a theorist and a reformer, and though he was never a doctrinary philosopher, either by temperament or choice, he was in his whole attitude toward life possibly more philosophic than those who would reduce its mysteries and intricate complexities to categorical formulas called *laws*. Heine was an artist, and as such his poetry had its philosophy. It must not, however, be inferred that he began his poetic career with a theory of art. He did nothing of the kind. The theory of art which we find him proclaiming in Paris and championing in works of the last period of his life, was the reflective precipitate of previous artistic experiences, experiments, and attainments.

One must admit that in these last works Heine became a critic of his own youth and earlier writings. But the admission does not tell the whole truth. In the first periods of his career Heine was influenced by the four great movements in the higher life of Germany: Romanticism, Hegelianism, Goethecult, and Teutonism. In later years he recognized the limitations and onesidedness of each movement, and he changed from a disciple into a critic. In spite of this change, the works of Heine are an organic whole. Growth there is, a gradual seeing clearer, but no turning in a different direction to see the sunrise. Heine always faced the East. A difference there is between his earliest and his latest poetry, a difference so great that even Heine was tempted to believe in its radical nature. But the difference was one of degree, not one of kind. Heine never faced the West to meet the dawn, he never mistook sunset for sunrise, and he did not see the new light because he turned about, but because he climbed higher on the path which first he trod.

Heine has made very difficult a sympathetic study of his poetic life. Its anticlimaxes are notorious. Those who would speak of him with justness are fain to recall Scheffel's lines:—

Das ist im Leben hässlich eingerichtet,
Dass bei den Rosen gleich die Dornen stehn.

The rose-bush of his poetry is full of thorns, which make their presence known with almost vicious pricks when we stoop to inhale the rare perfume of its blossoms. The gibes and flippant grossness of the poet often come at moments when we are least prepared to accept them in a philosophic spirit. It is no gentle touch that rouses us from reveries into which he has plunged us. Irritation is unavoidable. We object not so much to the reminder that we are of the earth earthy, and that human life is not a paradise, as to the character of this reminder. We protest that a handful of mud is not the most fitting method of proving our earthliness, nor pruriency of vice the only alternative to paradise. And Heine did often resort to such means. They are the blot on the escutcheon of the poet, and no critic can purge it thereof. This may as well be admitted. It is a necessary qualification to a setting-forth of the poetic worth of Heine.

The poetical life of Heine shows five periods, or rather phases, of growth. They were not distinct, or exclusive of each other. The transition from one to the other was gradual. No sudden revulsion gave new content to his poetic consciousness at any one stage of his development, or a different direction to his artistic striving. Rather the experiences of life modified for him, in a natural process of evolution, the poetic contours of existence and modulated its poetic significance.

In the first of these phases, the personal element predominated. Heine appears to have seen only his own life through the medium of his emotions. The source of his poetry was wholly in his self, and the poet saw only this self. It was the period of poetic awakening. The great world of non-self was as yet a dreamland for the young poet. In this dreamland he sang his songs of love. When Heine collected his poems in

the *Book of Songs*, he called the first book or cycle *Youthful Sorrows*, and its first sub-title *Dream Visions*.

In its second phase the poetry of Heine dealt with something more than self. The purely personal element found its twin sister in the world of human volition. Observing objective life, but observing it through the medium of his emotions, Heine began to compare two realities, viz. the emotional reality of self and the emotional reality of non-self. He reflected poetically. The dissonances of human life grated on his nerves. His subjective longing for harmony began to impart to his poetry something of the quality that characterizes the poetry of isolation. Subjective world-sorrow, of the type prevailing in the works of Lenau, came to the surface. Not inappropriately Heine introduced the second part of his *Book of Songs* with translations from Byron. The tragedies *Almansor* and *Ratcliff* and the novel-fragment *The Rabbi of Bachanach* had their poetic source in this enlarged subjectivity. In those days Heine, too, thought himself called to write a new *Faust*.

Characteristic, however, was the retention of the poetic world of dreamland as a refuge from the discordant reality. When Heine published, as a *Lyrical Interlude* to his two tragedies, a series of poems from world-forgetting and world-forgotten realms, where blooms the lily fair in all her purity or slumbers the lotus-flower on the banks of musical rivers, he sought to purge himself of pessimistic despair that was clutching at his heart. The poem, so often sung to Mendelssohn's setting, beginning with the stanza : —

Auf Flügeln des Gesanges,
Herzliebchen, trag' ich dich fort,
Fort nach den Fluren des Ganges,
Dort weiss ich den schönsten Ort,¹

¹ On song's exulting pinion
I'll bear thee, my sweetheart fair,
Where Ganges holds his dominion —
The sweetest of spots know I there.

and closing with the stanza : —

Dort wollen wir nieder sinken
Unter dem Palmenbaum
Und Lieb' und Ruhe trinken
Und träumen seligen Traum,¹

sounds the general note of this poetic Hejira.

That this fanciful world failed to satisfy the poet is evident from the last stanza of the *Prologue to Lyrical Interlude* : —

Sie spielen und singen, und singen so schön,
Und heben zum Tanze die Füße ;
Dem Ritter, dem wollen die Sinne vergehn,
Und fester umschliesst er die Süsse —
Da löschen auf einmal die Lichter aus,
Der Ritter sitzt wieder ganz einsam zu Haus,
In dem düstern Poetenstübchen.²

When Heine first saw the sea at Cuxhaven, the two emotional realities with which he had dealt mirrored themselves in the great phenomenon of its existence. The titanic power of the ocean responded to the aspirations of his troubled soul. The great deep symbolized for Heine the seething unrest of human life. But through its magnificent self-sufficiency it pictured to him also a nobler repose than that which he had sought in dreamy fancies.

Of Heine it has been said that he was the first German poet to discover the poetry of the ocean. This discovery he

¹ And there, while joyously sinking
Beneath the palm by the stream,
And love and repose while drinking,
Of blissful visions we'll dream.

— *Buch der Lieder : Lyrisches Intermezzo. No. 9.*

First and last stanza. Translation by E. A. BOWRING.

² So sweetly they play and so sweetly they sing,
In the dance they are moving so lightly,
That the Knight before long finds his senses take wing,
He embraces his sweet once more tightly,
When all of a sudden the lights disappear,
And the Knight 's once more sitting in solitude drear
In his poet's low garret unsightly.

— Translation by E. A. BOWRING.

would not have made had he regarded the emotional realities of his poetry as final. Not being able to do so, he sought harmony elsewhere. Lenau could not escape from his own emotional constructions, and would not if he could. The Atlantic did not enlarge his vision. Heine sought escape, and the Baltic pointed the way. Some years later, in the first book of *Pictures of Travel*, Heine speaks of this message that the sea had for him. Two brief passages are worth quoting. They help to explain much of the paradox which from now on crept into his writings and made his irony notorious. The two passages contain the two elements of this irony: the sense of human insignificance and the sense of potential human sublimity. In the first he writes:—

“A curious feeling comes over me when I wander alone in the dusk on the beach: behind me flattened dunes, in front of me the billowing, endless sea, above me the sky like a gigantic dome of crystal,—a pigmy I seem to myself, yet my soul expands immeasurably. The grand simplicity of nature that surrounds me here, constrains and exalts me at the same time, more so than any other exalting environment has ever done. No cathedral was ever large enough for me: my soul would ever soar with its old titanic prayer higher than the Gothic columns and burst through the vault into freedom.”

The second passage follows a few lines later:—

“Would that we might look down from above upon the doings of men with the omniscience of the past! When I wander at night along the beach, listening to the song of the waves, and all sorts of boding memories awake in my soul, then it seems to me as if I had sometime thus looked down from above and fallen to earth in dizzy fright. At such moments my vision appeared to be of such telescopic keenness, that I saw the stars wandering across the heavens in their actual size and was blinded by all this whirling glamour; it is as if from the deep background of a millennium all kinds of thoughts came to my mind, thoughts of ancient wisdom; but they are still so nebulous that I do not perceive their intent. Only this much I know: that all our vaunted knowledge, striving, and producing must appear just as petty and vain to some higher spirit, as that spider appeared to me which I watched so often in the library at Göttingen.”

This enlarged conception of nature modified the poetic activity of Heine. His poetry entered on a third phase. The most significant feature of this change was the *attempt* to measure human life not by the standards of personal volition, but by the standards of a great natural phenomenon. The sea taught Heine that the ceaseless changes of its parts do not destroy the solidarity of its character. For the first time in his life the perpetual unity of momentary units was unveiled to him. The stability of change, the rest of motion, the harmony of discord, and the universality of individuality — the ocean proved these paradoxes true. The new truth which it revealed to him was glorified in his poems of the sea.

In *Pictures of Travel*, he now tried to look at human life as the great ocean of conscious being, as a great mass of ever changing volition. With the same keenness of vision he noted its details, but these details still seemed small and petty. Philistinism was rampant. The great theme of life would not at first throw off its nebulous cloak. Again we find him at Nordeney, and the question life had refused to answer is now put to the sea, and the sea, too, makes no reply: —

Am Meer, am wüsten, nächtlichen Meer
Steht ein Jüngling-Mann,
Die Brust voll Wehmut, das Haupt voll Zweifel,
Und mit düstern Lippen fragt er die Wogen:

“O löst mir das Rätsel des Lebens,
Das qualvoll uralte Rätsel,

* * * * *
Sagt mir, was bedeutet der Mensch?
Woher ist er gekommen? Wo geht er hin?
Wer wohnt dort oben auf goldenen Sternen?”

Es murmeln die Wogen ihr ew'ges Gemurmeln,
Es wehet der Wind, es fliehen die Wolken,
Es blinken die Sterne gleichgültig und kalt,
Und ein Narr wartet auf Antwort.¹

¹ By the sea, by the desert, night-cover'd sea
Standeth a youth,
His breast full of sadness, his head full of doubtings,
And with gloomy lips he asks of the billows:

The attempt of Heine to study life as a great unit disclosed to him only its artificiality and disintegration. Provincial philistinism, as one of the great negative forces of German life, he now castigated in *The Harztrip*. In the *Book Le Grand*, he attacked the principle of aristocracy. Here for the first time the civic democracy of Heine stood forth like a mountain peak around which the early dawn is playing. Whether, in giving expression to his democracy, Heine misinterpreted the importance of Napoleon for modern European civilization, and, in doing so, manifested a lamentable lack of patriotic spirit, as his detractors would have it, or whether his estimate and attitude were just, is immaterial. The fact remains that Napoleon appeared to Heine as the poetic personification of civic progress. He was the man of the people, the martyr of his age. On his person royalty of Europe avenged itself for the desecration of its sacrosanct existence by the people, and in him it sought to crush out the new principle of civic progress which threatened aristocratic rule. Heine unquestionably overlooked the negative side of the activity of Napoleon which Immermann recognized so distinctly. But for that very reason he saw its positive side as a poetic fact. In a vision of rare beauty and impressive simplicity he prophesied the emancipation of the people from the guardianship of the few.

Heine had no illusions regarding the infallibility of the demos. Otherwise *Le Grand*, a simple drum-major of Napoleon's army, had not become the poetic representative of the masses. In

" O answer me life's hidden riddle,
The riddle primeval and painful.

* * * * *

Tell me what signifies man ?

From whence doth he come ? And where doth he go ?

Who dwelleth among the golden stars yonder ? "

The billows are murm'ring their murmur eternal,
The wind is blowing, the clouds are flying,
The stars are twinkling all listless and cold,
And a fool is waiting an answer.

— *Buch der Lieder : Die Nordsee. Zweiter Cyklus.*

No 7. *Fragen.* Translation by E. A. BOWRING.

more subtle imagery the awakening of democratic energies has hardly ever been pictured than in this book. Simple are the expressions of the wants of the people: "Bread—a kiss—honor!" But they embrace the substance of life: material, emotional, spiritual realities! These it demands and these it will have. The beat of the drum, as Le Grand wields his drumsticks, conveys to us the dumb thoughts that course through heart and brain of the masses, more effectively than the polished speech of society. The people will be free to enjoy their treasures. Joyous was this drumbeat under Napoleon. But Napoleon is no more. Le Grand's drum—but let Heine speak:—

"Never had I thought that the old, hard drum could give forth such notes of grief as Le Grand now lured from it. Every drumbeat was a tear; fainter, ever fainter they sounded, and like a dismal echo sighs burst from the breast of Le Grand, and he grew perceptibly weaker and more ghostly; his withered hands trembled with frost; he sat in a dream, and with his drumsticks he beat the empty air, and hearkened to distant voices; and at last he looked at me with a deep, abysmal, beseeching gaze—I understood him—and then his head sank on the drum. Le Grand never drummed again in this life."

Le Grand, the great and joyous, but naïve and untutored people, Le Grand was dead. The Restoration had killed him. Heine read the look of agony. He pierced the drumhead with his sword and went forth trumpeting the bold challenge of liberty, the challenge of a new people aroused from its semiconsciousness to a greater sense of its civic rights and to a more rational understanding of their meaning. That was the central thought of Heine's *Pictures of Travel*; and therefore he welcomed later the Paris July Revolution with pæans of joy.

Heine's celebrated *Book of Songs* appeared now. New the greater part of the poems were not. But their arrangement was new. His poems had been lyric outbursts of the moment. When first published they came like gusts of refreshing wind, so unconventional and sprightly was the treatment of their themes, and so close to the hearts of men these themes them-

selves. In their new form they swept over Germany like a steady breeze. The artistic nature of Heine forced him to affirm the positive elements of life in a manner equally large and comprehensive as that in which he set forth its negative forces in *Pictures of Travel*. The subjective moments of life lost none of their individuality, but, seen from a new angle, they now appeared as a great whole. The *Book of Songs* was the song of a life.

Heine seems to have distinguished between the view taken of life in the *Book of Songs*, and the view presented in his prose writings of this period. The poem *Epilogue*, which concluded the first edition of the *Book of Songs*, drew something of a sharp line between the two realities, — the reality of poetry and the reality of prosaic life : —

Wie auf dem Felde die Weizenhalmen,
So wachsen und wogen im Menschegeist
Die Gedanken.
Aber die zarten Gedanken der Liebe
Sind wie lustig dazwischenblühende
Rot' und blaue Blumen.

Rot' und blaue Blumen !
Der mürrische Schnitter verwirft euch als nutzlos,
Hölzerne Flegel zerdreschen euch höhnend,
Sogar der hablose Wanderer,
Den eu'r Antlitz ergötzt und erquickt,
Schüttelt das Haupt,
Und nennt euch schönes Unkraut.
Aber die ländliche Jungfrau,
Die Kränzewinderin,
Verehrt euch und pflückt euch,
Und schmückt mit euch die schönen Locken.
Und also geziert eilt sie zum Tanzplatz,
Wo Pfeifen und Geigen lieblich ertönen,
Oder zur stillen Buche,
Wo die Stimme des Liebsten noch lieblicher tönt,
Als Pfeifen und Geigen.¹

¹ As on the plain shoot up the wheat-stalks,
So do the thoughts in the spirit of man
Grow up and waver :
But the gentle thoughts of the poet

Somewhat later Heine wrote in one of his prose sketches: —

“I really do not know whether I deserve to have my tomb adorned some day with the laurel wreath. Poetry — however much I love it — was never anything more to me than a pleasant toy or a consecrated means to heavenly ends. Never have I set much store in poetic fame, and whether my songs meet with praise or reproof, I care little. But a sword ye shall place upon my tomb, for I was a faithful soldier in the wars of liberation of humanity.”

However, the poems of Heine were in effect no longer pretty toys when he collected them in the *Book of Songs*. The glory of that more serious conception of his poetic mission even then shed some of its lustre on this collection. When he welded the momentary units of his song into an organic unit, poetry was becoming *a consecrated means to heavenly ends*. The poetry of liberty militant was singing in his heart.

The first ten or twelve years of the subsequent exile of Heine brought to fruition this poetic theme of liberty. In these years Heine passed through the fourth phase of his growth. It was one of poetic clarification.

Pictures of Travel had undermined and torn down, but had

Are as the red and blue color'd flowers
Merrily blooming between them.

Red and blue color'd flowers !
The surly reaper rejects you as useless,
Wooden flails all-scornfully thresh you.
Even the needy traveller,
Whom your sight rejoices and quickens,
Shaketh his head,
And calleth you pretty weeds :
But the rustic maiden,
The twiner of garlands,
Doth honor and pluck you,
And with you decketh her beauteous locks :
And thus adorned, makes haste to the dance,
Where pipes and fiddles sweetly are sounding,
Or to the silent beech-tree,
Where the voice of the loved one still sweeter doth sound
Than pipes or than fiddles.

— *Buch der Lieder : Die Nordsee. Zweiter Cyklus. Epilog.*

Translation by E. A. BOWRING.

offered no equivalent. They did not make political propaganda by proposing any new organization of society in place of the old. The student of civil government will turn in disappointment from the prose writings of Heine if he expects to find therein concise suggestions for reorganizing civic life. But it is not to the discredit of Heine as a poet that he offered no academic solution, in fact it is decidedly to his credit. Heine felt that there was that in collective life which needed to be freed from the trammels of old forms, and which, if so freed, would work out its own salvation. This was the keynote of *Pictures of Travel*. Heine had only felt the existence of some latent power in society. Seen it he had not. He called it freedom. But freedom is a vague term, and it was as yet a vague conception for Heine. Its opposite, unfreedom, he could define. That he had experienced, that he had seen in all its pernicious manifestations, and that he could picture. The clergy and the aristocracy were not its only representatives, though they were its most drastic exponents. With merciless hand he flayed its champions. But what freedom is, and how it would or could express itself most effectively and adequately, of that he was not so sure. How near the temptation lay to reconstruct a new social order as an aid to the acquisition of freedom, is seen from the step taken by the contemporaries of Heine, the Young Germans. They wielded their pens, with such art as was theirs, not merely to combat archaic forms, but to replace these by new forms. They fought for political institutions of the republican type. Heine was in so far identified with their methods as he attacked existing political and social conditions. He was, however, too much of a poet to join with them in their political schemes of government. He was also too much of a democrat to look for the apotheosis of freedom in any political reform which had its source in the brain of a few enthusiasts and not in the general character of the people.

That was the position Heine occupied when he came to Paris. It is fully expressed in his first report as the Paris correspondent of Cotta written in the fall of 1831. In it he gives an account of the paintings exhibited at the Paris Salon. From

the description of Decamp's *Turkish Patrol in Smyrna* one might be tempted to exclaim: This correspondent is a republican! From the description of Delaroche's *Cromwell at the Tomb of Charles I*, one might be justified in considering the writer a royalist. But Heine was neither. The two descriptions balance each other. It is clear that Heine dissociated freedom from political forms. What freedom signifies, signified at least to the poet, of that we get an inkling when we read the criticism which Heine makes of Robert's painting, *The Reapers*. It was perhaps not mere accident which placed the critical estimate of Robert's painting between the criticisms of the other two pictures. Here we meet with the words that illuminate the past and future striving of Heine: —

“His great masterpiece, *The Reapers*, is, so to speak, the apotheosis of life: gazing at it one forgets that there is any valley of the shadow of death, one doubts that there can be any place more beautiful and dight than this earth. ‘Earth is heaven, and men are holy, transfused with the divine essence,’ that is the grand revelation which streams forth from this picture in blissful colors.”

The divine glory of life, which Grabbe had denied and neither Lenau nor Grillparzer had been able to conceive, — for that Heine now entered the lists.

His new poems, collected and published shortly after he took up his residence in Paris, bore the title, *New Spring*, and the title augured well for his future. Now, indeed, Heine began to acquire that large conception of human life which we find him essaying in vain in *Pictures of Travel*. As now he stood upon the shores of human activity, he might well have exclaimed as he did of the sea: —

Thalatta! Thalatta!
 Sei mir gegrüsst, du ewiges Meer!
 Sei mir gegrüsst zehntausendmal
 Aus jauchzendem Herzen,
 Wie einst dich begrüßten
 Zehntausend Griechenherzen,
 Unglückbekämpfende, heimatverlangende,
 Weltberühmte Griechenherzen.

* * * * *

Mir ist als sass ich winterlange,
 Ein Kranker, in dunkler Krankenstube,
 Und nun verlass' ich sie plötzlich,
 Und blendend strahlt mir entgegen
 Der smaragdene Frühling, der sonnengeweckte,
 Und es rauschen die weissen Blütenbäume,
 Und die jungen Blumen schauen mich an
 Mit bunten, duftenden Augen,
 Und es duftet und summt und athmet und lacht,
 Und im blauen Himmel singen die Vöglein —
 Thalatta! Thalatta!¹

The nature-panteism of Heine found its counterpart in human life, and its spirit breathed through the two great prose works of this period, *Germany* and *The Romantic School*, both first written in French, for the French people, as a revelation of the divinity of human life and as a contribution toward the era of peace and good will among men. In the first of these works Heine wrote:—

“God is identical with the world. He manifests Himself in plants, which lead, without consciousness, a cosmic-magnetic life.

¹ Thalatta! Thalatta!

Hail to thee, O thou ocean eterne!

Hail to thee ten thousand times

From hearts all exulting,

As formerly hail'd thee

Ten thousand Grecian hearts,

Misfortune-contending, homeward-aspiring,

World-renown'd Grecian hearts.

* * * * *

Methought whole winters long I sat

An invalid, in darksome sick-room,

And now I suddenly leave it,

And with dazzling rays am greeted

By emerald Springtime, the sunny-awaken'd;

And snowy blossoming trees are rustling,

And the youthful flowers upon me gaze

With eyes all chequer'd and fragrant:

There's a perfume and humming and breathing and laughing,

And the birds in the azure sky are singing—

Thalatta! Thalatta!

— *Buch der Lieder: Die Nordsee. Zweiter Cyklus.*

No. 1. Meergruss. Translation by E. A. BOWRING.

He manifests Himself in animals, which in their sensual dream-life feel their existence more or less dimly. But supremely, He manifests Himself in man, who both feels and thinks, who can distinguish his individual existence from objective nature, and whose reason even entertains the ideas that assume phenomenal existence in the world of appearances. In man the Deity attains self-consciousness, and this self-consciousness in turn reveals itself through man. However, this does not eventuate in the individual or through the individual, but in and through man as a collective existence, so that each man embraces and manifests only a part of the Divine Universe, all men, however, collectively embrace and represent the Divine Universe as an idea and as a reality. Every people, possibly, has the mission to recognize and realize a definite phase or part of this Divine Universe, to comprehend a series of phenomena and to manifest a series of ideas and to transmit the result to future peoples, who have a similar mission. God, therefore, is the real hero of world history, the latter is His perpetual thought, His perpetual act, His word, His deed, and of all humanity one may rightly say: It is the incarnation of God!"

And Poetry? Poetry is the spirit divine that proclaims the dignity and moral worth of material life, reclaims for it the place it should occupy in the thoughts of men, and reestablishes the primitive union of matter and spirit. Years before, in the *Harztrip*, Heine had sung: —

Jetzo, da ich ausgewachsen,
Viel gelesen, viel gereist,
Schwillt mein Herz, und ganz von Herzen
Glaub ich an den heil'gen Geist.

Dieser that die grössten Wunder,
Und viel gröss're thut er noch;
Er zerbrach die Zwingherrnburgen
Und zerbrach des Knechtes Joch.

Alte Todeswunden heilt er,
Und erneut das alte Recht:
Alle Menschen, gleichgeboren,
Sind ein adliges Geschlecht.

Er verscheucht die bösen Nebel,
Und das dunkle Hirngespinnst,
Das uns Lieb' und Lust verleidet,
Tag und Nacht uns angegrinst.

Tausend Ritter, wohl gewappnet,
 Hat der heil'ge Geist erwählt,
 Seinen Willen zu erfüllen,
 Und er hat sie mutbeseelt.

Ihre teuern Schwerter blitzen,
 Ihre guten Banner weh'n!
 Ei, du möchtest wohl, mein Kindchen,
 Solche stolze Ritter seh'n?

Nun, so schau mich an, mein Kindchen,
 Küsse mich und schaue dreist!
 Denn ich selber bin ein solcher
 Ritter von dem heil'gen Geist!¹

¹ Now that I have grown to manhood,
 Read and travelled more than most,
 Swells my heart, and I acknowledge
 With full heart the Holy Ghost.

He has wrought the mightiest marvels,
 Mightier works for suffering folk —
 He cast down the baron's stronghold,
 Burst for aye the villein's yoke.

Old and deadly wounds He healeth,
 And restores the ancient right:
 All mankind are born His nobles,
 All are equal in His sight.

Mists of evil scares He from us,
 Fancies dark on brains that prey,
 Sickening us of mirth and gladness,
 Grinning at us night and day.

Thousand Knights in shining armor,
 Of the Holy Ghost inspired,
 Chosen His will to do in all things,
 With great courage hath he fired.

How their blessed swords can lighten,
 And their blessed banners wave!
 O my child, dost long to see them,
 Knights so noble and so brave?

Well, my child, come, look upon me,
 Kiss me, boldly look, and boast
 Thou hast looked on such a champion,
 Knight, child, of the Holy Ghost!

— Translation by J. TODHUNTER.

This thought of the redeeming mission of the spirit of liberty, Heine now conceived as the mission of poetry. No party! No creed! No fettering of humanity in the chains of the past! No living in the hope of a perfect hereafter! No shutting out the light that is streaming through all the wide world! The world is divine and man created in the image of God! Appreciate this fact, nor slur the divine by castigating life! See in your neighbor a phase of godliness, nor demand that this phase shall accommodate itself to your phase! See in nations the incarnation of some of the divine glory, nor assail a nation, because its glory is not the glory of your own nation! See in history the growth of a divine principle, nor expect that modern life shall return to the lesser realization of this principle in the past! Recognize in modern life the spirit of progress—how it weaveth busily at a new order of things, and learn to love this life for that which it is, for its sweetness, and its expression of the Divine, imperfect as this may be! Life will march on to nobler goals and goals beyond these. Glory in this its eternal energies! And poetry? Poetry shall make this possible for you. Poetry shall sanctify you with the consciousness of your own share in this victory and teach you the joy of patience.

Such is the refrain that runs through Heine's prose of this period. The systematic philosopher may shrug his shoulders and smile at the naïve interpretation of the religious socialism of Saint-Simon. The political reformer will eschew the views of Heine as visions of impractical worth. Yet who shall deny the superb poetry of his conception? And, indeed, who shall say that poetry itself is not thereby self-justified, a sovereign power for good in the world?

This is a different view of poetry than that to which the Young Germans clung. Karl Gutzkow, one of the leaders of the Young Germans, could not free himself from his earlier conception of the mission of poetry. He continued to preach theories. *Uriel Acosta*—one of his best dramas—preached a doctrine, the doctrine of religious freedom. It reflected and argued, and, stirring though its appeal may be, the drama is polemic, not creative. Heine, however, came to recognize

that poetry is true to itself only when it creates, and in its creations bodies forth the divine realities of life. Its preaching is done by deeds in that it ennobles men through the beatific vision of the Divine incarnate in life, and lets them see the reality of their consciousness of God.

Such views would not well permit identification with any party. Impartially Heine launched his bolts against republicans and royalists. But he did so only because their partisan doctrines prescribed the path along which the development of human life should progress. When Frederick William IV of Prussia ascended the throne, the people of Germany entertained extravagant hopes of larger liberties. All their undefined longings were now to be gratified in some mysterious way. For a brief space these hopes seemed justified, and German poets began to put into verse the ideas they entertained of political reforms. The people welcomed this verse as the statement of their own political desires. Ferdinand Freiligrath, a young merchant of Detmold, whose imagination had revelled in the wilds of Africa and pictured scenes of nature-life and primitive humanity, now ventured to state the reason for this flight in the poem *The Negro Prince*.

Heine was right when he turned his irony loose on poetry of this kind. That his verse which inveighed against the profanation of poetry was hardly less unpoetic, if judged by his own standards, requires little argument. *Atta Troll*, whatever may be said of its technical perfections, stood upon the level of *Pictures of Travel*. The polemic was versified; that was about the only essential difference. *Germany, A Winter's Tale*, suffered for the same reasons. However, — and one cannot emphasize this fact too strongly, — the objective point of the polemical irony of Heine had shifted. Formerly the oppressors of freedom experienced the bite of his satire; now its would-be friends met the same fate. He turned against those who considered life, at least in its present form, “bedevilled” (*durchteufelt*), and who created a world of poetic illusions as a refuge for the perturbed soul. In doing so, he criticised his own earlier works as frankly as those of contemporaries.

Ein neues Lied, ein besseres Lied,
O Freunde, will ich euch dichten:
Wir wollen hier auf Erden schon
Das Himmelreich errichten.¹

But how? Not by turning into political poets! The interests of the fatherland let prose-writers defend and prose-writers break the yoke of servitude: —

Doch in Versen, doch im Liede
Blüht uns längst die höchste Freiheit.²

Heine was at his happiest when he derided the romantic conception of an imperial Germany which was typified in the poems that clustered around the legend of Frederick Barbarossa sitting enchanted in the Kyffhäuser: —

Herr Rotbart — rief ich laut — du bist
Ein altes Fabelwesen,
Geh, leg dich schlafen, wir werden uns
Auch ohne dich erlösen.

Auch deine Fahne gefällt mir nicht mehr,
Die altdeutschen Narren verdarben
Mir schon in der Burschenschaft die Lust
An den schwarz-rot-goldnen Farben.³

¹ A newer song, a far better song,
My friend, I'm fain to sing you.
We would upon this Earth e'en now
The Heavenly Kingdom bring you.

— *Deutschland. Kaput I.*

² But in verses, but in song
Long since freedom reigns for us.

— *Atta Troll. Out of a variant of Kaput III.*

³ Sir Red Beard, I exclaimed, thou art
A worn-out, silly fable!
Away to thy bed! for without thy aid
To free ourselves we're able.

Thy banner, too, beguiles me no more,
Fool-talk of Germany olden
Has quenched long ago in the Burschenschaft
My love for the black-red-golden.

— *Deutschland. Kaput XVI, stanzas 21 and 23.*

And so Heine held that poetry does not perform the political deed. Poetry only frees the souls of men, and the freedmen do the deed. The deed follows as the result of poetry.

This silent influence of poetry, and its true relation to the practical affairs of life, was nowhere better expressed by Heine than in the sixth canto of *Germany*. He there described himself walking through the moonlit streets of Cologne. A spectre, which has often stood at his elbow, follows him. Its meaning has troubled him heretofore. Now he accosts it, and receives the reply : —

Ich bin kein Gespenst der Vergangenheit,
Kein grabentstiegnier Strohvisch,
Und von Rhetorik bin ich kein Freund,
Bin auch nicht sehr philosophisch.

Ich bin nicht praktischer Natur,
Und immer schweigsam und ruhig.
Doch wisse: was du ersonnen im Geist,
Das führ' ich aus, das thu' ich.

Und gehen auch Jahre drüber hin,
Ich raste nicht, bis ich verwandle
In Wirklichkeit, was du gedacht;
Du denkst, und ich, ich handle.

Du bist der Richter, der Büttel bin ich,
Und mit dem Gehorsam des Knechtes
Vollstreck' ich das Urtheil, das du gefällt,
Und sei es ein ungerechtes.

Dem Konsul trug man ein Beil voran,
Zu Rom, in alten Tagen.
Auch du hast deinen Liktor, doch wird
Das Beil dir nachgetragen.

Ich bin dein Liktor, und ich geh'
Beständig mit dem blanken
Richtbeile hinter dir — ich bin
Die That von deinen Gedanken.¹

¹ No ghost am I from the days gone by,
No grave-arisen spectre :
I have no affection for rhetoric,
I'm no philosophic projector.

The cynical accusations that Heine hurled against the stupidity of the Germans and the selfishness of their leaders gave, and have since given, much offence to easy-going patriots. Had Heine's love of country been less, his sarcasm had been milder; had his conception of poetry conformed to lower standards, his pen had not been dipped in vitriol. Out of patriotism he laid himself open to the charge of being unpatriotic. Convinced that Germany could accomplish its world-mission only through democratic agencies, he drew down upon himself the anathemas of all party men. Such poems as *The Weavers*, with its threefold curse,—against deistic dogmas, aristocratic royalty, and a false conception of the fatherland,—should be read in the light of the enthusiastic words written by Heine of Luther and Lessing. His secret reverence for all things divine, his noble conception of government, and his ideal valuation of German character are then recognized.

It would be doing Heine a poor service to extol the poetic works of his fifth period of poetic activity as models of poetic beauty. He never realized in practice the ideal of poetic art which he championed in his great essays of the fourth period.

I am of a practical nature, in fact,
 And of silent resolution :
 But know, that whatever thy spirit conceives,
 I put in execution.

And even when years have pass'd away,
 I rest not, nor suffer distraction,
 Till I've changed to reality all thy thoughts :
 Thine's the thinking, and mine is the action.

Before the Consul they carried the axe
 In Rome of old, let me remind thee :
 And thou hast also thy lictor, but he
 Now carries the axe behind thee.

Thy lictor am I, and follow behind,
 And carry in all its splendor
 The polish'd executioner's axe —
 I'm the deed which thy thoughts engender.

— *Deutschland. Kaput VI. Last stanzas.*

Translation by E. A. BOWRING.

Romancero was not a perfect work. One can hardly call it even great, except in parts, unless one bears in mind that it was written in the agonies of gradual dissolution. Then indeed one marvels at the imperial mastery of spirit over matter. In *Romancero*, and in the poems later attached thereto, we see the poet in the last phase of his activity. In his "mattress-tomb," as he was wont to call the last eight years of his life, the memories of a whole life came back to him. The poisonous odors of cynicism mingled with the sweet perfume of hope and joy. The pettiness and worthlessness of life reared their hideous forms by the side of beauteous visions of the grander significance of existence. *Romancero* gave a certain unity to these appalling contrasts.

Though it cannot be said that Heine pursued a systematic idea when he gave to the world these reawakened and present memories, yet a certain consciousness of the essential progress and meaning of all his checkered career seems to speak to us from the threefold arrangement of the poems. The first book, *Histories*, condenses in a series of cynical ballads all those impressions of life which made it so difficult for Heine to perceive the glory of its progressive divinity. The second book, *Lamentations*, is the complex story of his flight from pessimistic despair. Romantic dreamland, polemic opposition, nationalism, rationalistic reconstruction of the world-order, sensual delights, love, ironical self-contemplation,—all have availed him naught.

Ein Posten ist vakant! — Die Wunden klaffen —
 Der Eine fällt, die Andern rücken nach —
 Doch fall ich unbesiegt, und meine Waffen
 Sind nicht gebrochen. — Nur mein Herze brach.¹

And this lament is followed by the last book, *Hebrew Melodies*. There the meaning which poetry had acquired for Heine, as

¹ One outpost's vacant now! My wounds gape wide;

One falls, his place soon others take;

I fall, but not defeated; at my side

Unbroken lies my sword. My heart did break.

— *Romancero*: *Zweites Buch. Lamentationen.* Last stanza.

the paraclete of life and of his life in particular, is directly and indirectly conveyed to the reader, — directly in the poem *Jehuda Ben Halevy*; indirectly in *Disputation*, with its supreme disregard of doctrinal religion. Fittingly, — for poetry shall bring to men the great joy of life, — Heine chose one of his earlier poems as the motto for this book : —

O lass nicht ohne Lebensgenuss
Dein Leben verfließen !¹

It is evident to every reader of Heine that his poetic bark never found shelter in the haven which the parting of the mists had revealed. All his life he had fought against that which he at least considered false. Too long he had seen the negative side of existence to be able to phrase in poetry that which he later knew poetry ought to phrase : beauty.

Heine recognized this as well as anybody, and stated the fact in one of the poems of *Romancero* : —

Die arme Schönheit ist schwer bedrängt,
Ich aber mache sie frei
Von Schmach und Sünde, von Qual und Not,
Von der Welt Unflätere.

Du arme Schönheit, schaudre nicht
Wohl ob der bittern Arznei;
Ich selber kredenze dir den Tod,
Bricht auch mein Herz entzwei.

O Narretei, grausamer Traum,
Wahnsinn und Raserei!
Es gähnt die Nacht, es kreischt das Meer,
O Gott! o steh mir bei!

O steh mir bei, barmherziger Gott!
Barmherziger Gott Schaddei!
Da schollert's hinab ins Meer — o Weh —
Schaddei! Schaddei! Adonai!

¹ O let the days of thy life pass not
Without tasting life's blisses.

Die Sonne ging auf, wir fuhren ans Land,
 Da blühte und glühte der Mai!
 Und als wir stiegen aus dem Kahn,
 Da waren unser ZWEI.¹

Beauty was cast overboard!

The long fight had made irony a habit, and now this habit refused to be shaken off. Surprising this is not. Living in exile in a foreign land, Heine could see Germany only in contrast to his democratic ideals. He was denied contact with its daily life, and the surface indications seemed to convey small hope of regeneration. It is the more commendable that Heine could hope, and could interpret the past history of German thought as the prophecy of future growth. But the poetic form for this thought was denied him. The fight for freedom had made him a theoretical democrat, though it deprived him of the power to conceive the poetic vision of democracy. His poetry was, to the end of his life, what it had always been,—the

¹ Poor beauty, prithee quake not so,
 'Tis I will set thee free
 From sin and shame, and want and woe,
 And all thy misery.

Poor beauty, prithee quake not so,
 Though hard the cure may be,
 My heart will break, and yet I know
 That death is good for thee.

O mockery and evil dream!
 A madman's ghastly lot!
 Dark broods the night, loud howls the sea,—
 O God, forsake me not!

Forsake me not, thou clement God,
 Thou Merciful! Shaddai!
 It plashes in the water—woe—
 Jehovah! Adonai!

The sun broke, towards the smiling land
 We steer'd our swift canoe,
 And when we stepp'd out on the strand,
 Then we were only Two.

— *Romancero: Historien, Nächtliche Fahrt.*

Translation by R. GARNETT.

reflection of confused lights and shadows, mirrored in his personal consciousness. He could not identify himself with the life of his nation and by doing so gather into perfect imagery the separate lights and shadows. Conflict made him over-conscious of his individuality. He wrote as an individual for a people, not as the representative of a people. Heine, the man, was a democrat; Heine, the poet, was anything but a democrat. He craved fellowship with human life; but the rule of convention and custom, of caste and party, of creed and dogma, left his craving unsatisfied. The key-note of his democracy sounded clear and sweet only on the rarest of occasions. He could not sing of civic democracy without jangling his polemic bells, nor could he sound the pæan of the divine glory of life without thinking of its detractors. His civic democracy could express itself in poetry only through negation of political forms, and his religious democracy only through accentuation of the sensual elements of life. This was the tragedy of his last days, the failure of a life. One cannot read the *Memoirs* of Heine or his last poems and not feel the great sadness of a poet conscious of his failure. Nor can one read these memoirs and poems and not feel also his supreme resignation in the thought of the Eternal.

Wo wird des Wandersmüden
Letzte Ruhestätte sein?
Unter Palmen in dem Süden?
Unter Linden an dem Rhein?

Werd' ich wo in einer Wüste
Eingescharrt von fremder Hand?
Oder ruh' ich an der Küste
Eines Meeres in dem Sand?

Immerhin! Mich wird umgeben
Gotteshimmel, dort wie hier,
Und als Totenlampen schweben
Nachts die Sterne über mir.

CHAPTER IX

THE REVOLUTION OF 1848-1849

POLITICAL POETRY : THE DRAMA OF REVOLUTION, REVOLUTIONARY LYRICS

BÜCHNER, HERWEGH, ANASTASIUS GRÜN, FREILIGRATH

Politisch Lied, du Donner, der Felsenherzen spaltet,
Du heil'ge Oriflamme, zum Siegeszug entfaltet,
Du Feuersäule, dem Volk die Knechtschaftswüste hellend,
Du Jerichoposaune, der Zwingherrn Bollwerk all zerschellend.

— ANASTASIUS GRÜN.

HEINE was right when he raised his voice against political poetry as a prostitution of art. It hardly requires argument to sustain his contentions. The simple reflection that political poetry — in the narrower sense — has never outlived its generation is quite sufficient. Always dealing with conditions most ephemeral, it must pass and be silent with the passing of these.

For all that political poetry has its mission in the world, sometimes a mission of grand significance. The refrain of the theorist, "Political song, ugly song!" is a two-edged sword requiring careful handling. Had Goethe written out of deeper sympathy for German political problems, his influence had been greater. Without excusing the nature of the attack launched against him by Menzel and Börne, one may admit that the resentment of the young champions of civic freedom was a not unnatural result of the apparent coolness of Goethe toward all partisan enthusiasm. For half a century and more after this attack was launched the memory of Goethe suffered. It has taken the best work of the best minds of Germany to make him less of a bugaboo of all that is unpatriotic, immoral, and irreligious. And to this day, despite the popularity

of his poems, a large number of Germans prefer to picture him in the congenial company of His Satanic Majesty.

Admitting frankly the imaginative insufficiency of political verse, the critic of the human phases of literature finds it impossible to disregard the passionate longing for civic rights which presaged in German poetry the revolution of 1848. Of this passionate appeal the political literature of Young Germany was, on the whole, devoid. It prepared the soil and sowed the seed, but political *poetry* it was not. The efforts of the Young Germans were, in the main, journalistic, even in their novelistic attempts. To the poetry—if the word be permitted—of Büchner and of Herwegh, Freiligrath, Anastasius Grün, and others, they occupied approximately the same relation as the early Romanticists did to the poetry of Kleist and of Körner, Arndt, and Schenkendorf. They stood in the breach between an old ideal and a new, between the ideal of national political unity and the ideal of national civic liberty.

Herwegh's poem *To Uhland* made plain this difference between the impulse that actuated the poetry of national reconstruction and the passion that hurled defiance at the old régime.

Nur selten noch, fast graut's mir, es zu sagen,
Nehm' ich der Freiheit Evangelium,
Den Schatz von Minne und von Rittertum,
Zur Hand in unsern hartbedrängten Tagen.

Wie hab' ich einst so heiss dafür geschlagen!
Wie hastig dreht' ich Blatt um Blatt herum!
Ich kann nicht mehr — ich kann nicht — sei es drum!
Es soll doch Niemand mich zu schelten wagen.

Ein ander Hassen und ein ander Lieben
Ist in die Welt gekommen, und von allen
Sind wenig Herzen nur sich gleich geblieben.

So sind auch deine Lieder mir entfallen;
Ein einziges steht fest in mir geschrieben;
Kennst du das Lied: "Weh' euch, ihr stolzen Hallen!"¹

¹ Rare are the moments 'mid this bitter clamor
When in my hands — confession though I dread —
The leaves of freedom's book are open spread,
The treasure sweet of love and knighthood's glamour.

Georg Büchner was the Kleist of this new political poetry. The points of resemblance between the two poets are many. Büchner stood in much the same relation to the political lyrics of revolution as Kleist did to the patriotic lyrics of national uprising. Neither lived to participate in the outbreak to which he looked forward. Büchner died in 1837, only twenty-four years of age. He was influenced by the Young German movement as Kleist was by romanticism, and much in the same way. At the same time he was not of the movement any more than Kleist was a romanticist. He felt the dramatic quality of the approaching civic conflict as Kleist the impending struggle for political independence. He saw the ferment of modern life as Kleist perceived the national unrest, and he looked for the freeing of democratic agencies as Kleist looked for the victory of nationalism. But he fell short of the final poetic attainments of Kleist, since Kleist not only looked for, but looked into, the potential reality of nationalism. The story of the life of Büchner, as told by K. E. Franzos, betrays all the features that contributed to the tragic end of Kleist. Büchner died a natural death. Had his days been prolonged his end probably would have resembled the end of Kleist. With Kleistian earnestness he faced the metaphysical problem of life. With Kleistian impatience he assigned to art its great solution. And with the passion of Kleist he worshipped vitality.

Büchner's novel-fragment *Lenz*, an incisive study of that unhappy poet of the literary storm and stress of the eighteenth

Once, valiantly I fought for thee with passions bridling !
 Once, greedily I turnèd leaf on leaf !
 But now — I'm weary, weary, and as lief
 Would stop. Yet none shall chide me for my idling !

A new hate fills the world with new emotion,
 A new love summons us with trumpet loud.
 And few whose hearts cling to the olden notion !

Thus thy songs, too, are covered by a shroud.
 One only claims my ever warm devotion.
 Dost know the song, " Woe, woe, ye halls so proud ! "

— *Dissonanzen XXXVI: Ludwig Uhland.*

century, revealed the all too sensitive nature of its writer. The prodigious problem of human life and its artistic significance were the theme of this searching tale of profoundest human woe. Kleist's pantheistic conception of nature was paralleled by Büchner's pantheistic conception of human life. History became for him not a record of facts, but a living fact. In it the individual hardly existed ; he seemed to Büchner but a drop in the tremendous ocean of life, — an ocean that stretches before our gaze in sombre, pitiless expanse. It engulfs us. It does not lure us by the sublimity of its restful peace. Writing to his *fiancée*, Büchner put into words the awe that bore down upon him :—

“I feel crushed by the frightful fatalism of history. A terrible monotony stares at me in human nature, a relentless power in human conditions, granted to all, yet granted to no single being. The individual—nothing but foam on the waves ; greatness—a mere accident ; the sway of genius—a veritable puppet play, a ridiculous fretting against inexorable law ; to comprehend this law—our highest aim ; to control it—ever impossible !”

To refer to Büchner's sense of the awful autocracy of history as a pantheistic conception of human life is, of course, justified only in so far as it was embryonic pantheism. Büchner died before the dire vision was illumined by the afterglow of its divine meaning. To escape from the torments inflicted on his soul by such unsettled metaphysics, he plunged into revolutionary activity. Here, too, he was a second Kleist. Life ! life ! How Kleist yearned for its abundance ! How he strove to shake off the cold hand of death which he ever felt clutching at his heart ! How he thirsted for the well-springs of living waters ! And so it was with Büchner. With feverish energy he rushed into the fray where human vitality seemed most assertive. Shortly before doing so, he wrote in one of his letters : “I am alone as in a grave. When shall your touch awaken me ? My friends forsake me, and like deaf men we shout into each other's ears.”

Out of the grave into the living reality, out of the shadow of death into the sunlight of life, out of the doom of impassive noth-

ingness into personal touch with the thrill of being! That was the cry of Büchner's soul. In Giessen he founded the Society of Human Rights. Without completing his medical studies, he returned to Darmstadt, the city of his birth, and in the service of the revolutionary propaganda wrote *The Hessian Courier*, fiercely attacking the government. From the windows of his father's house he watched the police as they passed by, fearing that any moment might betray his identity with the author of the *Courier*. Here he composed, no, excreted, the first German drama of revolution, *The Death of Danton*, and as he wrote he hid the manuscript from the eyes of his father among musty tomes. The drama was begun in January, 1835, and finished in the next month,—proof enough of the feverish excitement under which Büchner labored and of the intense directness of his poetic conception. Without exaggeration he could say after its completion, "The police were its muses."

The principal source of Büchner's work seems to have been Thiers's *Histoire de la révolution française*, supplemented by Mignet's work bearing the same title. The scene is laid in the few days intervening between the fall of Hébert and the death of Danton, March 24th to April 5th, 1794. Robespierre has crushed the revolutionary extremists and turns against the moderate Dantonists. The republican form of government is his ideal and controls him completely. He acts automatically without giving any evidence that he possesses human sympathy. Party principle and he are one. To the dogmatic intensity of Robespierre Danton opposes only a vague philosophy of human rights and a correspondingly fitful activity. The first scene of Act I and the corresponding scene of Act II give the exposition of his philosophy and character. "In our fundamental laws," says Hérault Séchelles, one of the Dantonists, "right should take the place of duty, well-being that of virtue, self-defence that of punishment. Everybody should be allowed to assert himself and live according to his nature. Whether he is rational or irrational, cultured or uncultured, good or bad—the state is not concerned. . . . Everybody ought to be free in the pursuit of happiness as he sees it, provided that no one shall be permitted to do

so at the expense of another or to disturb another in his peculiar pursuit thereof. The individuality of the majority should reveal itself in the physiognomy of the state." That is, of course, the doctrine of individualism. But how it is to be realized, of that Danton has no conception. "That is all very nice," Danton remarks, "but who is to carry it out?" The humanity of Danton revolts against the only means which can avail in the struggle with Robespierre. He shudders at the thought of another orgy of blood. Lacking the energy of purpose, he remains impassive and permits things to take their course. At the last moment, in the trial scene, he wins a signal moral victory over his accusers; but his doom is sealed. His last hope is : that death is total extinction.

Of dramatic action in the usual sense we find little in the play, of character development typified in a close and logical sequence of individual deeds, even less. Büchner's drama is as innocent of the conventional structure of a rising and falling action as it is barren of any climax and anticlimax of individual conflict. What does he give in place thereof?

First : A living picture of revolutionary society. With Shakespearian rapidity and frequency the scenes shift from day to night, from street to club, from the privacy of the home to the publicity of the legislative chamber, from the Palace of Justice to the Convent, from *conciergerie* to Luxemburg, etc. Thirty-two times the scene shifts in the three acts of the play. The life of Paris in the spring of 1794 passes before our eyes. No description; all a living fact. Its diverse interests : political, economic, moral, religious, artistic, set forth in dialogue. The speakers so far as possible without personality. The picture impressionistic. Details of value only to the *tout ensemble*. Mass effect the object aimed at and attained.

Second : This mass of humanity appears incapable of understanding its own volition or the impulses that rule it. It acclaims a fanatical dogma : Republicanism. A dogma is at least something definite and provides a vent for its turbulent energies. And Robespierre is this dogma incarnate.* Danton is the ideal of the masses, but Robespierre is their reality.

Third : A man — Danton, the only personality of the play.

Two questions force themselves upon us. What is Büchner driving at ? And what impelled him to such dramatic creation ? The answers are distinct opposites : democratic pessimism and democratic optimism.

No one can read the play without feeling that he has been brought into the presence of a force that brooks no opposition and rides rough-shod over the individual. The overpowering impression conveyed by a first reading is expressed in the words of Danton : "Puppets are we, manipulated by unknown powers. ✓ We ourselves — nothing, nothing !" Individuality is a dream, individual character a chimera. Neither exists. The great monster, our age, casts us forth like spray to settle as foam on its surface. Büchner's drama had been preceded and was followed by many that dealt with revolutionary themes, but by none that dealt with the theme of revolution. ✓ None so pictured the absolutism of the mass ; none transformed in anything like the same way an abstract conception into a concrete fact, collectiveness into an individuality, and aggregation into a unit ; none reproduced *en bloc* revolution itself. Once more the dramatic hero is an impersonal reality. ✓ Kleist, in his *Herman*, had made the German nation his hero ; Büchner, in *The Death of Danton*, so treated a historic period. But between the two dramas there is this difference : Kleist's nation sees the goal of its striving ; Büchner's period is a force unconscious — of its destiny. Having the purpose of Kleist at the time he wrote *Herman*, Büchner still stood where Kleist stood when *Amphitryon*, *Penthesilea*, *Kohlhaas* came from his pen.

Like Immermann and Heine, Büchner welcomed the July Revolution of 1830 as the harbinger of new hopes. Looking backward he saw in its great forerunner of the previous century an epoch-making fact in human history. It betokened for him a visible stage in the development of humanity, a new step, in the self-assertion of the latent consciousness of human destiny. The enthusiast for civic liberties regarded it as substantiating a teleological view of history. In Strassburg Büchner sought to interpret history in this light and failed. The result was

that fearful conception of history of which he wrote to his fiancée. Out of the gloom into which this failure cast him, he wrote his drama. Danton was Büchner, and the words of Danton — "The world is chaos. The world-god to be born is nihility" — were wrung from the very soul of Büchner. The quintessence of the philosophy of Danton is this spectral thought from which Büchner fled into active life. Like the works of Kleist in his transition period, Büchner's drama was pathological. Through this dramatic conception Büchner shook off the grip of pessimistic philosophy. He externalized the dread vision of life, and in doing so lifted the dark shadows from his soul. The instinct of self-preservation forced him into artistic conception.

The necessity of doing so sprang, however, from a deep-rooted optimism. Büchner longed for an optimistic justification of life. But he was a realist in the sense that he demanded of life that it justify itself — justify itself at least to the artist. Behind all the forms of which we become conscious, Büchner argued, is life, and this life is eternal beauty. The artist cannot bring this beauty home to our consciousness by an exact reproduction of any one form, much less can he do so by idealizing the facts of experience. He must love every form in which life manifests itself; none can be too insignificant for him and none too ugly. For all have their place in the great totality wherein life alone is manifest. Considered in the light of these views, *The Death of Danton* reveals an optimistic tendency. The French Revolution was for Büchner a manifestation of constructive as well as destructive forces. Though his philosophy could not detect conscious vitality in this manifestation, his artistic sense rebelled against the monstrous thought of purposeless activity. Büchner did not say: "Go to, now! My imagination can solve this problem for you and me. I will recall those times of seeming chaos, and you shall see with your eyes and hear with your ears the things that were done and said. You shall look upon this chaos without the bias of the participant, and then perhaps you and I shall see a great purpose therein, the sublime law of human progress."

Nothing of the kind. An artistic impulse forced him into dramatizing the revolution without reflection. But if he had analyzed this impulse, he would have phrased it in some such words.

Dark as the picture is that confronts us, a light seems to be shining beneath the horizon. It is not utter darkness. There is the suspicion of a radiance that somehow makes us feel the gloom cannot last. When Danton leaves the circle of his political friends at the close of the first scene, it is with the words, "The statue of liberty has not yet been cast, the furnace is aglow, all of us may yet burn our fingers." That means, if it means anything, that this blind activity, taken as a whole, tends to a definite goal, and that goal liberty. It means also that the actors, taken individually, do not comprehend the nature of this goal or the nature of the agencies that are to attain to it. It means, lastly, that all individual scheming to hasten a solution and give a particular direction to agencies not understood cannot lead to permanent results. The inactivity and indifference of Danton are not wholly pessimistic. He is not wholly without faith. His reason cannot discern plan or motive in existence, but his heart tells him reason lies if it asserts the absence of both. Between the two extremes, stoic indifference and epicurean love of life, he falters back and forth.

Standing one night at the window of his home, Danton has a vision of the preceding years and his own part therein. Beneath him moves the world like a gigantic charger, he astride its back urging it on. But his steed will not be controlled. He is dragged across the abyss. The horror of it all is upon him, and he screams out in his agony, "September!" Once he had thought himself called upon to guide the revolution, and was forced into the bloody deeds of the September days. He feels that he has sinned. "Will it never grow quiet and dark?" he exclaims, "that we may be spared further sight and hearing of our ugly sins!" But this sense of sin would be impossible without a foreboding sense of some supreme, purposeful activity.

Here we have the psychological moment. The heart says, yes, the brain, no. Danton cannot endure the feeling of having

bungled with the forces of life and seeks escape in a fatalistic philosophy of history : —

“ Yes, — we had to ! The man on the cross made things easy for himself when he said, ‘ Offence must come, but woe to him through whom offence cometh ! ’ It must ! Yes, this must ; there lies the rub ! Who shall curse the hand on which has fallen the curse of the must ? Who spoke this must, — who ? What is it in us that whores, lies, steals, and murders ? [Puppets are we, manipulated by unknown powers ; we ourselves — nothing, nothing ! — only the swords with which spirits are fighting ; but the hands are invisible. Now I am calm again. ”

Energetic interference on the part of Danton in the course of events is not to be expected of a man who has lost his way in the labyrinth of emotional reasoning. But in Danton’s fitful assertion of himself a fundamental faith in human progress comes to the surface. It will not down. We find it prompting his reply to Lacroix : —

“ *Lacroix* : The dunces will shout : long live the republic, when we pass by (*i.e.* on their way to execution). ”

Danton : What difference does it make ? Let the flood of revolution cast up our bodies where it listeth, with our fossil bones people will be able to knock all kings on the head. ”

➤ Even Danton, the indifferent pessimist, must admit that revolution has done away with at least one false form : individual despotism.

But revolution meant far more to Büchner than the upheaval of governments. *The Death of Danton* dealt with facts of the social organism that underlie political systems. A year after *Danton* was written Büchner thus addressed himself to Karl Gutzkow : —

“ By the way, you and your friends do not seem to me to have taken the wisest course. Reform society by the means of an idea from above, from the cultured class down ? Impossible ! Had you been even more political in your methods, you would very soon have reached the point where your reforms come to an end. You will never bridge this chasm between cultured and uncultured society. I am convinced that the cultured and the well-to-do minority, how-

ever great the concessions it demands for itself from the powers that be, will never be willing to give up its diacritical relation to the great mass. And as for this great mass, for it only two levers exist: material misery and religious fanaticism. A party that knows how to use these levers will conquer. Our age needs iron and bread—and then a cross, or the like. I believe that in social matters one must start with an absolute principle of right, look for the formation of a new spiritual life in the people, and let senile modern society go to the devil. What conceivable good can it do to let a thing run about between heaven and earth?"

That was not a clear and precise statement of democracy. Büchner appears like one groping in the dark. Yet one must concede that he held in his hand the thread which might guide him out of the gloomy maze. If *The Death of Danton* dwells on one phase of the social organism more than another, this phase is the material and spiritual degeneration of the masses. The drama makes such a hopeless impression, because not one of its characters recognizes this fact. The republic of Robespierre is but a party rule. His methods are political, and it is evident that he too must soon come to the end of his reforms. Danton realizes the futility of such efforts, but does not realize that the way out of revolution is a slow process of material and spiritual elevation of the great mass. Nor had the dramatist realized anything more than that the great mass rules and that the quality of its rule is commensurate to its material and spiritual welfare. But he held that in this rule, whatever it may be, there is life or the possibility of life. It is vain to antagonize it, and it is as vain to demand agreement between its standards and our own. Let it alone! It will develop, because life is back of it, and this life is a law unto itself.

Büchner preached the hope of *laissez faire*, a curious contradiction; but a contradiction no greater than that of the two facts that his drama rooted in democratic optimism and depicted democratic pessimism.

Neither Georg Herwegh nor Anastasius Grün (Count Anton Alexander von Auersperg) left any poetry comparable in value to their political verse. As political poets, however, they con-

stituted in conjunction with Ferdinand Freiligrath the lyric triumvirate of the revolution.

Herwegh's *Poems of a Living Being* have the same ring that made Arndt's poems of liberty so effective. Their appeal was direct and of the same elemental power. Heine called Herwegh "the iron lark." The tirades of Herwegh against the tyranny of German rulers came straight from the heart and spoke straight to the heart. The cry of the poet for freedom was the battle-cry for manhood.

Reisst die Kreuze aus der Erden!
 Alle sollen Schwerter werden!
 Gott im Himmel wird's verzeih'n.
 Lasst, o lasst das Verseschweissen,
 Auf den Amboss legt das Eisen —
 Heiland soll das Eisen sein!¹

Herwegh was a South-German. He was born in Stuttgart (1817). Like Arndt, his early life was of the humblest, for he was the son of a cook. The only career to which such a youth could aspire was the ministry, and Herwegh was sent to the Theological Seminary in Tübingen. Strauss's *Life of Jesus* made an apostate of him. The dogma of Christian humility, preached to the people in distorted form, roused his ire.

With a God who permitted conditions of servitude and demanded that man stultify his manhood by submitting calmly in the hope of a better life to come, Herwegh had no patience: —

Ich hab' gethan, was ich gesollt;
 Und wer, wie ich, mit Gott gegrollt,
 Darf auch mit einem König grollen.²

¹ Tear the crosses from their bases,
 Forge them into swords and maces!
 God above will pardon thee.
 Be no useless versifier,
 Snatch the iron from the fire —
 Iron let our saviour be!

— *Gedichte eines Lebendigen: Aufruf.*

² I've done what duty bade me do:
 And since I've chided God, I too
 May dare to chide the purple.

— *Gedichte eines Lebendigen: An den König von Preussen.*

He was preëminently, therefore, the poet of popular activity. None of his contemporaries sang as impassioned as he of the privilege, duty, right, and glory of action. To Frederick William IV he addressed his appeal:—

Sieh, wie die Jugend sich verzehrt
In Glutten eines Meleager,
Wie sie nach Kampf und That begehrt—
O drück' in ihre Hand das Schwert,
Führ' aus den Städten sie ins Lager!¹

If this poem is to be taken as an appeal to warfare against a foreign foe, it meant very little. Against whom was Prussia to wage war or what foreign power threatened the national existence of Germany? No, a foreign war was not the substance of Herwegh's appeal. Recalling the splendid justification of popular manhood during the Wars of Liberation and the manner in which these wars released popular energy from its bondage, Herwegh couched his exhortation in warlike figures of speech. He raised his voice against the Holy Alliance and the policy which submitted to foreign dictation in internal affairs. A manly stand against this dictation might mean war, and to this extent Herwegh welcomed war. He raised his voice against the régime of caste:—

Fürwahr, fürwahr, Du thust nicht Recht,
Wenn Du ein moderndes Geschlecht,
Wenn Du zu Würden hebst den Knecht!
Nur wer ein Adler, sei vom Adel!²

He raised his voice against the church and its claim to temporal power. Further demands were not formulated in the poem. For:—

¹ Behold our youth, a fire-brand,
Consumed like Meleager's life,
Yearning for deeds and battles grand—
O press the sabre in its hand,
Lead it from city-walls to strife! — *Ibid.* : 4th stanza.

² Forsooth, forsooth, thou art not right
In honoring the servile Knight,
A race decaying in our sight!
Let eagles wear the eagle's plumage! — *Ibid.* : 5th stanza.

Du weisst wonach der Deutsche glüht.¹

You are the head of the nation, Herwegh warned the new king; the people are its heart. Recognize what this heart desires, and in sympathy let it act through you. Give the German people something to live for. They have great ideals; let their ideals take form. The Teutonic character cannot develop in supine inactivity.

Herwegh was an intense patriot, and because he was, he struck such valiant blows for civic freedom. The most modern conception of patriotism, its world mission of peace through expanding commerce, was first phrased by Herwegh. His poem, *The German Fleet*, called upon his countrymen to untrammel themselves: —

Hinweg die feige Knechtsgebärde:
 Zerbrich der Heimat Schneckenhaus,
 Zieh mutig in die Welt hinaus,
 Dass sie dein eigen werde!
 Du bist der Hirt der grossen Völkerherde,
 Du bist das grosse Hoffnungsvolk der Erde,
 Drum wirf den Anker aus!²

Again the call to activity, the summons to energetic living. This was not the vague cosmopolitanism of the romanticists. For the sake of a better life at home and a truer recognition of civic duties, the Germans were to break through their narrow abode. With the mighty swing of Arndt's best lyric verse, Herwegh's prophecy pealed forth: —

Das Meer wird uns vom Herzen spülen
 Den letzten Rest der Tyrannei,
 Sein Hauch die Ketten weh'n entzwei
 Und unsere Wunden kühlen.

¹ Thou know'st what glows in German hearts.

² Go, lay thy craven mien aside,
 Thy snail's house boldly rend in twain;
 Go boldly forth, the world to gain,
 Thy purpose and thy pride!
 Good shepherd, thou, of all the nations wide,
 Thou hope of Earth, thou nation tried,
 Let go thy anchor chain! — *Die deutsche Flotte.*

O lasst den Sturm in euren Locken wühlen,
Um frei wie Sturm und Wetter euch zu fühlen;
Das Meer, das Meer macht frei!¹

The verse of Herwegh was fired by democratic optimism. He had an unbounded faith in the people. His was the confidence that Büchner lacked. "Out of the heart of the lowly alone cometh the salvation of the world!" is an exclamation that Herwegh could make, not Büchner. In the community of ideals and the interchange of thought the active, regenerative powers of a nation are born. Therefore, "Let the word go free!" The democracy of Herwegh was not theoretical, or academic. It was a part and parcel of his human nature. One recognizes its genuine sympathetic quality in such a plaint as the following:—

Allein must du entfalten deine Schwingen,
Allein nach deinen Idealen jagen,
Allein dich auf die See des Lebens wagen,
Allein, allein nach deinem Himmel ringen.²

Many of Herwegh's poems were pessimistic, but pessimistic only because governments would not free the enfeathered spirit of democracy. *A Midnight Walk* was steeped in the bitterest sadness. The poet takes us through the quiet streets. The world is tired of its travels and sleepeth: "Let it, let it dream!" Behind prison bars a prisoner fights again the noble fight of freedom: "O God of Freedom, let him ever dream!" Within palace walls on purple cushions tosses to and fro the monarch; the vengeance of the people is upon him and the earth

¹ The sea will wash and cleanse our heart
From rust-stains left by tyranny;
Chains snap when breathes the mighty sea,
And wounds soon cease to smart.
O let the storm wind toss thy locks apart,
Unfreedom with the storm and wind depart,
The sea, the sea makes free! — *Ibid.*

² Alone thou now art forced to wing thy flight,
Alone to follow thy ideal quest,
Alone to venture from thy little nest,
Alone, alone to seek the blessed light!

— *Gedichte eines Lebendigen: Dissonanzen, XXVII.*

has no refuge: "O God of Vengeance, keep him in his dream!" In lowly hut the peasant sees the harvest ripen of a larger life and a happier: "O God of Poverty, let poor men dream!" The world is full of sorrow, freedom is crushed to the dust, and tyranny whets its blade: "O God of Dreams, let all of us dream on!" Out of this deep and true love of democracy was born a hatred of tyranny—not in the abstract, but as practised in German states—that knew no bounds. It was of the same character as the hatred for the French invaders that the poets of the Wars of Liberation glorified. Herwegh's *Song of Hate* sang itself into many a heart in those days of incipient revolution. Its refrain passed from mouth to mouth:—

Wir haben lang genug geliebt
Und wollen endlich hassen! ¹

As Arndt sang of "holy German rage," so Herwegh sang of "holy hatred" for tyranny. "Ça ira! Ça ira!" With quick instinct he caught in his own poems the popular swing of Béranger's refrains. His poems *Break a Way for Freedom, Vive la République! The Song of Hate, Chains, Free Speech*, seemed to many the passionate cry of their own hearts. For Herwegh, government autocracy and democratic self-rule were the only two opposing forces, and this contrast made his refrains sound like the crack of a whip:—

Zwischen hier und zwischen dort
Gibt's nur eine Brücke:
Freiheit, o du Felsenwort!
Vive la république! ²

The spirit of Arndt breathes in these lines. Like Arndt, Herwegh had his heroic ideal. Arndt's *Song of Schill* was paralleled by Herwegh's *Song of Béranger*:—

¹ We've loved enough, and loved too much,
And now we'll do the hating!

² 'Twixt the hither and the yon
One bridge spans the chasm:
Liberty, thou rockribbed word!
Vive la république!

— *Gedichte eines Lebendigen: Vive la république.*

Ein Schwert mit Rosen wollen wir ihm bringen,
Ein Schwert mit Rosen meinem Béranger.¹

And like Arndt, Herwegh had no song of love, — for which he admired Béranger, — but only the song of war and combat, the clarion call to arms.

Herwegh had no patience with a policy of *laissez faire*. However great his optimistic faith in his people, he believed in leadership and in definite, well-directed action. He was wise enough to see that a republican form of government gave to the people the opportunity of self-discipline and self-education. He was also wise enough to perceive that aggregation requires a leader, not a leader who stands upon personal ideals and teaches the people, but a prophet who reveals to the people the secret of its life, and formulates for it the ideal which all its activities portend. And as such a democratic leader he regarded the true poet. Poetry was for Herwegh the incarnate consciousness of the nation: —

Ja, ich bekenn's, die Stimme Gottes ist
Des Volkes Stimme! und wer ihr vertraut,
Der hat sein Haus auf Felsen sich gebaut,
Indess der Zorn des Herrn die Frevler frisst.

Dem Sänger Heil, der ihrer nie vergisst,
Dem nur des Volkes Schmerz vom Auge thaut,
Der nicht im eignen Jammer sich beschaut
Und selbstgefällig seine Sünden misst!

Doch sollt' er drum nur Waffenträger sein,
Der dienend hinter seinem Heere steht
Und, wenn es Not thut, reicht ein Schwert hinein?

Der nicht voran, ein Feuerzeichen, geht
Und Seher ist wie sonst? Ich rufe: Nein!
Und dreimal: Nein! und stimme für Profet!²

¹ A sword entwined with roses will we bring him,
A sword with roses for my Béranger.

² Yes, I confess, God's voice must surely be
The people's voice! Whose house stands on the rock
Of such a faith, withstandeth ev'ry shock,
But o'er the villain's sweeps God's raging sea.

Herwegh's *Poems of a Living Being* appeared in 1841. Within a year the little book passed into its fifth edition. Its publication in Germany was of course impossible, and, indeed, Herwegh had before that found his position in Germany untenable. The poems were sent forth on their mission of democratic freedom from Zurich, where the poet had found a refuge. The circulation which they attained in the face of government censorship over importation and sale of unwelcome books was the more remarkable, and proves that Herwegh, the son of the people, had spoken from and to the heart of the people.

Anastasius Grün had not the passionate command of exhortation and invective which made the verse of Herwegh so effective. He could not say of himself: —

Die Leidenschaft ist mein Eliaswagen
Und Feuer nur kann mich zum Himmel tragen.¹

Under the pseudonym Anastasius Grün, the Austrian Count, Anton Alexander of Auersperg, put forth his own peculiar lyric intonation of revolt. *Saunterings of a Vienna Poet* struck home in circles that Herwegh did not reach, or, if he did, failed to influence on account of his radical professions.

Auersperg was born in the Austrian duchy of Craniola, April 11, 1806. Most of his youth was spent in the capital of Austria,

Thou singer, hail, who heeds the people's plea,
Whose tears for its great sorrow flow,
Whose thoughts dwell not on private woe,
On private sins with specious vanity !

But should he, armor bearer only, deal no blow,
Ever behind the ranks, no other choice,
Than pass the sword, when presses hard the foe.

Nor as the battle's oriflamme rejoice
A seer, as ever, now ! My vote is, No !
And three times, No ! The prophet has my voice !

— *Gedichte eines Lebendigen : Dissonanzen, II.*

¹ For passion is my chariot of fire,
Through fire to the heavens I aspire.

— *Ibid. : Dissonanzen, XIII.*

where he was educated in philosophy and jurisprudence. In later life he was elected to the German *Vor-Parlament* and to the National Assembly, from which he retired when the days of riot and bloodshed broke over Germany. He was not nor could he be a democrat. He was, however, a liberal-minded aristocrat.

Anastasius Grün was the Schenkendorf of political lyricists. The aristocratic bent of his character and of his poetry showed itself, as it did with Schenkendorf, in his reverting to chivalric conceptions of life. Schenkendorf found his ideal of national reconstruction in the romantic glorification of "The Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation." Anastasius Grün drew his ideal of civic reconstruction from the liberal policy of Joseph II of Austria. He and Schenkendorf needed the sanction of authority for their striving. But when one stops to consider that Anastasius Grün was of Austrian nobility, bred and reared in the very hotbed of intolerance and aristocratic prejudices, and, furthermore, that his political poetry antedated Herwegh's by a full ten years, his writings appear not a whit less revolutionary than the latter's. *Saunterings of a Vienna Poet* put the seal of aristocratic sanction on dissatisfaction. If a nobleman could feel dissatisfied, how much more reason for the cultured burgher of the land to look for a change of government systems!

The collection of poems, bearing the title *Saunterings of a Vienna Poet* and published in 1831, was preceded (1830) by a cycle of ballads founded on incidents in the life of Maximilian I. This cycle Anastasius Grün called *The Last Knight*, and in so doing indicated his romantic adherence to ideals of the past. The ballads were distinctly political in their tendency. They stood for freedom of thought, in particular for freedom from the overbearing, autocratic influence of the Holy Synod. In the ballad *The Will and Testament* occur these two stanzas. The dying emperor speaks to his son: —

Dich rufen andre Kämpfe, die Schwerter rosten ein,
Ein Kampf wird's der Gedanken, der Geist wird Kämpfer sein;
Ein schlichtes Mönchlein predigt zu Wittenberg im Dom,
Da bebt auf altem Thronszitz der Mönche Fürst zu Rom.

Geläutert schwebt aus Gluten dann der Gedank' ans Licht,
 Und schwingt sich zu den Sternen! O hemm' im Flug ihn nicht!
 Frei wie der Sonnenadler muss der Gedanke sein,
 Dann fliegt er auch wie jener zu Licht und Sonn' allein.¹

Those were bold words to write in the Austria of Metternich in the year 1830. Still bolder were the words of the four ballads *Knights and Freeman*. His song of Swiss freedom in the first of these ballads recalls Schiller's *Tell*. It is the year 1499, the knightly hordes of Maximilian are moving to subjugate the country. The poet bids them halt and look from "a lofty Alpine summit" down upon this land that lies before them like a "gigantic scroll."

Wisst ihr, was drin geschrieben? O seht, es strahlt so licht!
 Freiheit! steht drin, ihr Herren; *die* Schrift kennt ihr wohl nicht.
 Es schrieb sie ja kein Kanzler, es ist kein Pergament,
 Drauf eines Volkes Herzblut als rotes Siegel brennt.²

A great love of "Old Austria" made the nobleman resent the reactionary policy of its rulers, and this love of country emboldened him to raise his voice for civic liberties: freedom of thought, freedom of speech, and a more intimate relation between government and people. *Saunterings of a Vienna Poet* were dedicated to Ludwig Uhland, the patriotic poet. The collection of poems was hopeful, and since the poet dared not send it forth openly, he chose a pseudonym that betokened this hope-

¹ Thou art call'd to other conflicts, where the sword will be left behind,
 A battle of thought is coming, and the warrior will be the mind:
 In the minster of Wittenberg preaches a priest in friar's frock,
 And the prince of monks at the Vatican on his old throne feels the shock.

Then thought from the flame emerging, sweeps purified to light,
 And soars to the empyrean. Oh, hamper not its flight!
 For thought, like the sun-seeking eagle, unchain'd, unchecked must be,
 And then to the sun in the zenith, it will mount like the eagle free!

— Translation by J. O. SARGENT.

² Know you what there is written? Oh, see it beam so bright!
 Freedom stands there, ye princes! Can ye read the pages right?
 No chancellor engross'd it, it is no parchment chart,
 Where the red that burns in the signet is blood of the people's heart.

— *Der letzte Ritter: Die Schweiz*. Translation by J. O. SARGENT.

ful character, Anastasius Grün, *i.e.* Resurrected Green. The fresh green of spring following upon the bleak frost of winter was Auersperg's symbol of freedom triumphing over blighting autocracy.

In *The Last Knight*, he had traced in the life of Maximilian I the genesis and development of a liberal monarchy. *Saunterings of a Vienna Poet* dwelt upon the principle of enlightened feudalism as the mainstay and aim of monarchical rule. The poet was by no means a republican. He was a monarchist. He believed in a paternal monarchy, where the ruler was not a law unto himself and unto others, but the executor of a law greater than he. This law was the law of justice and equal opportunities to all. The monarch he considered the first servant of the common weal. In a series of poems, glorifying the kindly patriarchal reign of past monarchs: of Stephen I (Saint), King of Hungary, of Rudolph II, of Maria Theresa, of Joseph II, Anastasius Grün demanded a constitutional monarchy. He let Stephen recognize this principle of monarchy: —

Sei gegrüsst, mein Volk, und höre! Nimm aus meines Kanzlers Hand
Die Geschenke deines Königs, meiner Liebe erstes Pfand!
Freien Willens, freien Herzens, geb' ich Freiheit dir und Recht,
Dem ich mich der erste beuge huldigend als treuer Knecht!¹

By all that is holy Stephen swears to maintain these free gifts of love inviolate. He will not rule wilfully and arbitrarily, but according to the law. Not his will shall govern, but an organic law of the state. "For kings are not always wise; the law is never a fool." That was a blow straight from the shoulder at the principle of legitimacy according to which the monarch was a law unto himself and unto the people. The blow was driven home by the poem *Salonscene*, one of the few in which Anastasius Grün resorted to sarcasm. His characterization of Metternich, the all-powerful minister of Austria, was

¹ Hail! my people! Hail and listen! Love's first pledge to thee I bring.
From my chanc'llor's hands receive it, take the presents of your king:
Freely, willingly, and gladly grant I freedom thee and right,
And to these I render homage, first and last, their faithful knight.

— *Spaziergänge eines Wiener Poeten: Sanct Stephans Eid.*

soon common property. The last three stanzas created something of a sensation, the last line a perfect storm of applause:—

Könnst' Europa jetzt ihn sehen, so verbindlich, so galant,
Wie der Kirche fromme Priester, wie der Mann im Kriegsgewand,
Wie des Staats besternte Diener ganz von seiner Huld beglückt,
Und die Damen, alt' und junge, erst bezaubert und entzückt.

Mann des Staates, Mann des Rates! da du just bei Laune bist,
Da du gegen Alle gnädig überaus zu dieser Frist;
Sieh, vor deiner Thüre draussen harrt ein dürftiger Client,
Der durch Winke deiner Gnade hochbeglückt zu werden brennt.

Brauchst dich nicht vor ihm zu fürchten; er ist artig und gescheid,
Trägt auch keinen Dolch verborgen unter seinem schlichten Kleid;
Oestreichs Volk ist's, ehrlich, offen, wohlerzogen auch und fein,
Sieh, es fleht ganz artig: Dürft' ich wohl so frei sein, frei zu sein? ¹

That sounded like a taunt directed not merely at Metternich, but also at the people who submitted in such docility to his dictation. And the poem was in fact so interpreted. A taunt at Metternich it was, but it was not intended as a taunt at the great populace. Auersperg (Anastasius Grün) was not the man to summon the people to action or to rouse it to self-assertion by depicting its degradation. Like Schenkendorf, he brought his plea to the seat of constituted authority. The initiative did not rest for him in the people, but in the ruler. Arndt and Herwegh summoned the people to assert their manhood and realize their ideals. Schenkendorf and Anastasius Grün appealed to the patriotic conscience of royalty, from which

¹ Oh, could Europe only see him now, so affable, so gay!

How his smiles entrance the clergy, 'round the warrior's armor play,
How they rest in gracious pleasure on the grandee of the state,
How enchanted, then enraptured, ladies young and old do wait.

Man of State! Thou man of council! Since thy humor is so sweet,
Since toward all thou art so gracious, so complacent at this fête:
Lo, before thy door a client waiteth humbly in his need
For a nod from thy good pleasure that would make him glad indeed.

Surely thou needst never fear him, he's polite and quite genteel,
Carries in his simple tunic no assassin's hidden steel.

Austria's people, frank and honest, waits there with its well-bred plea,
Prays politely, "To be free, sir, might I take the liberty?"

— *Ibid.*: *Salonscene*.

they demanded recognition of the spiritual claims of nationality. Anastasius Grün dealt with ideals of civic freedom in the same vague and mystical manner as Schenkendorf with ideals of national independence. Both had definite propositions, but these propositions had the sanction of history. The Holy Roman Empire which Schenkendorf extolled was offset by patriarchal monarchy in the poetry of Anastasius Grün. The propositions of the two poets were essentially aristocratic; *i.e.* they were based on aristocratic, not democratic, leadership. Neither poet had a clear conception of democratic possibilities, though the spiritual element of popular life impressed both poets deeply. They sang of the common feeling of their people, not of its common volition, and what they desired most was: that the will of the government might supplement and guide the sentimental instincts of the people. Anastasius Grün felt democratically in so far as he believed that popular instinct was true to the noblest ethical ideals of mankind. But he could not think democratically. He fought in his verse for recognition of two great reciprocal elements in the state, and for establishment of their mutual relationship: aristocratic reason and democratic instinct.

The trio of political poets was made complete when Ferdinand Freiligrath published his *Confessions of Faith* (1844).

In January, 1842, Freiligrath was surprised by the grant of a pension from the king of Prussia for accepting which Herwegh and others took him to task. Like so many compatriots, Freiligrath had looked up to the crown prince of Prussia as the guarantor of a coming change in the organization of the state. He clung to this hope after Frederick William ascended the throne, and for two years accepted the royal gift, not as hush-money, but as a meed due the poet from the patron of art. Convinced finally that his hopes had been misplaced, he resigned the pension, and a few months later ranged himself openly in the ranks of opposition by publishing the aforesaid *Confessions of Faith*. The poems collected under this title were the prologue to his poems of political revolution. They were intended to illustrate

his transition from pensive to revolutionary poetic activity, and to bring this transition to a close. Two years later (1846) the exile Freiligrath thundered forth his *Ça Ira*. In 1849 a first collection of *New Political and Social Poems*, and in 1851 a second collection, hurled defiance at dead forms and worthless principles.

In the great struggle for civic liberties the poems of Freiligrath attained somewhat of the same prominence that the lyrics of Körner acquired in the conflict for national existence. For him, as for Körner, poetry was a consuming fire, which the storm-wind of a great national movement fanned into a flaming beacon. The passion of his heart tallied with the passionate desire of a people, transformed itself into concrete images, and raised his verse to a higher artistic level than was reached by Herwegh or Grün. The first poetic productions of Freiligrath were no more prophetic of the mighty appeals that later burst from his heart than Körner's *Zriny* was prophetic of the patriotic songs which made him the idol of a nation.

And still another point of resemblance cannot well escape the student. In Körner's songs of national independence a new thought was secretly stirring into life: the thought of civic liberties; in the direct appeals of Freiligrath to the civic consciousness of the nation, there was also hidden a new thought which made these appeals so much more powerful, the thought of social liberties. The personal equation in patriotism which made the lyrics of Körner so universally effective was represented in the verse of Freiligrath by the personal equation in civic life. Because Körner had come to regard Germans as citizens and not as subjects he made national independence a personal matter for all Germans. Freiligrath, in turn, made civic freedom of such vital import to his countrymen, because he saw in every citizen a member of the social organism. The poetry of Körner contained the prophecy of the political revolt of succeeding years; the poems of Freiligrath prophesied the social unrest of the last decades of the century.

Freiligrath was a Westphalian by birth, a son of the "red soil," which Immermann made memorable through *Münch-*

hausen. At sixteen years of age, he was taken from the gymnasium and apprenticed to a merchant; it being the intention of his family to prepare him for business-partnership with a wealthy uncle in Edinburgh. Born in 1810, he grew to manhood in a period of German national development that embittered older men than he. To be cut off from academic erudition and its abstract learning and to be thrown early into active life was, under prevailing circumstances, perhaps a blessing in disguise. He learned his French and English as forms of speech expressing vital facts of human life. With a facile imagination he transported himself into the life whereof this speech was the expression. In the same imaginative way he drew inspiration from the vocation that had been chosen for him. His own country offered so little, but beyond the sea — there were the lands of luxuriant wealth. Every merchant ship entering the harbor of Amsterdam — where Freiligrath filled a clerkship from 1831 to 1836 — brought its special treasures for him, memories of exotic regions and unbounded freedom. Upon every ship his soul took passage and was carried away to the forests and prairies of America, to the wilds of Africa, and to the hot verdure of Arabia. Poems scattered here and there in German magazines soon attracted attention and sufficient praise to induce the young poet to resign his clerkship and devote himself to literary work. In 1838, his first collection of poems was published. It was welcomed as few first works of German poets have ever been welcomed. The popular acclaim was significant of two facts: first, of the civic starvation in which Germany languished; second, of the democratic instincts of Freiligrath. For in satisfying or seeking to satisfy his own craving he supplied that which passed as food for the masses.

Poetic flights into far-away regions were no novelty in Germany. Goethe had placed his sanction upon them in *The West-Eastern Divan*. Schlegel had called attention to East Indian life and religion. Rückert was even then (1836-1839) putting forth his *Wisdom of the Brahmins*, and Lenau was casting a longing gaze toward America. Platen, Daumer, and Schefer were

coquetting with various forms of Eastern civilization, and Heine had sung his sentimental songs of the lotus and the palm tree. But the poems of Freiligrath brought something new. Philosophic reflection, didactic learning, rhetorical pathos, subjective world-sorrow, dreamy forgetfulness—the changes had been rung on all. Freiligrath gave his readers a plastic reality, not reflections, not meditations, not sentiments, not ideas connected with or stimulated by this reality, but the reality itself as his imagination saw it. Germans welcomed this new reality with the avidity of the starving, not because it was new, but because it was real. And they had no reality. Like a man who has been suffering of malnutrition and knows it not, Freiligrath steeped his soul in the exotic life of these foreign climes. It was Freiligrath who sang the song of the Arab:—

Dann Abends wohl vor meinem Stamme,
In eines Zeltes luft'gem Haus,
Strömt' ich der Dichtung inn're Flamme
In lodernden Gesängen aus.¹

The reality of these poems was drastic and often passed beyond the verge of ugliness. Not infrequently Freiligrath mistook brute force for vigor. But the starving are not squeamish when food is in sight, and Freiligrath did not hesitate at that which under wholesome conditions is repulsive. He did not deliberately choose the bizarre and frightful; he was simply unable to control an imagination that was spurred on by a feverish appetite for vitality. Furthermore, into this wild, exotic life of his fancy, Freiligrath projected, without being aware of the fact, a pessimistic sentiment. His descriptions of nature-life convey an impression similiar to that produced by Büchner's drama. In brilliant colors and bold outlines he portrayed the eternal combat between elemental forces and indi-

¹ At evening with my tribe around me,
Beneath the house of camel's hair,
The singer-flame that burns within me,
Should break in song upon the air.

— *Wär' ich im Bann von Mekkas Thoren*, 3d stanza.

Translation by ELIZABETH CRAIGMYLE.

vidual forms of life, ending in death and destruction of the latter. The *Lion's Ride* is perhaps the most striking example. But this atmosphere was not the result of speculative reasoning; it was only the sentimental effect of an instinctive reaction against conditions which made cheerful optimism impossible. In this sense, the first important publication of Freiligrath was permeated by a revolutionary spirit. To be sure, he could formulate as his poetic motto:—

Der Dichter steht auf einer höh'ren Warte
Als auf den Zinnen der Partei.¹

for which statement the king of Prussia surprised him with a pension. But even so, he was unconsciously championing the cause of a great party—the party of the people.

Soon after publishing these poems of the wilderness, Freiligrath began to recognize the nature of his striving. The vital forces of life, which he had sought in primitive nature and in primitive conditions of human existence, he now sought at home and among his countrymen:—

Und so denn freudig hegt er sein Gericht:
Den Boden wechselnd, die Gesinnung nicht,
Wählt er die rote Erde für die gelbe,
Die Palme dorrt; der Wüstenstaub verweht—
Ans Herz der Heimat wirft sich der Poet,
Ein anderer und doch derselbe.²

And now as he cast his searching gaze about, Germany seemed to Freiligrath like Hamlet: the energy of its purpose was sapped by introspection, and the spectre of freedom called it to avenge her death. It can only think, think, think, and dream, dream, dream! And when that conviction came to Freiligrath, he saw the time had arrived to arouse this dreamy

¹ The poet occupies a loftier look-out
Than battlements of party-creed!

² Henceforth he sits in judgment, blithe and free!
His heart unchanged, though changed the soil may be,
The red earth he prefers to yellow sand:
The palm trees wither, desert dusts depart,
The same, yet not the same, close to the heart
He nestles of his native land.— *Der Frei Stuhl zu Dortmund.*

waverer to action. He, too, had been such a dreamer and waverer. Now he determined to hold the mirror up to his countrymen by publishing the poems of his own period of uncertain aims as a *Confession of Faith*, and then from his exile in England he pealed forth the cry to arms *Ca Ira*.

Six poems — that was all the collection *Ca Ira* contained, but condensed into these was the sum and substance of revolution, its causes, aims, and justification. For the first time revolution was transformed into poetry, fierce and majestic, 'tis true, but poetry plastic as the best poems of Körner, and fitting to be placed alongside of the latter's *Song of the Sword*.

Before Sailing, written to the music of the Marseillaise, opened the series. The ship is ready to put to sea: —

Frisch auf denn, springt hinein! Frisch auf, das Deck bemannt!
Stosst ab! Stosst ab! Kühn durch den Sturm! Sucht Land
und findet Land!¹

Thus runs the refrain. It is a stanch vessel, commanded in the past by stanch men, stanch in deed and stanch in thought: Kosciusko, Washington, Lafayette, Franklin. Forth it sails through storm and lightning toward the land of the free. Boldly it captures the rotten galley that would arrest its progress; relentlessly it hurls its fires into the gayly decked yacht that would lure it from its course; and pitilessly it sends to the bottom the silver-laden fleet that tempts it to be untrue to its mission. For the ship bears on its taffrail the word: Revolution. Monarchy, church, and wealth succumb to its onslaught. It reaches the happy shores: —

Wo der Eintracht Fahnen wehen,
Wo uns kein Hader mehr zerstückt!
Wo der Mensch von der Menschheit Höhen
Unenterbt durch die Schöpfung blickt!²

¹ Aboard! Aboard! my lads! Man ship, my cheery band!

Cut loose! Cut loose! And brave the storm! Seek land and find the land!

² Where wave the banners bright of concord,
Where men to manhood's goal advance,
Unhampered by the thought of discord,
Heirs to creation's wide expanse!

— *Vor der Fahrt*, last stanza.

The fire-ship has done its duty and lies deserted in the harbor.

Every one of these six poems garbed its appeal in ballad form. They were semi-ballads, moving pictures of tremendous force: *Ice Palace*, *From Below Up! How to Do It*, *Free Press*, *Chess Knight*, — all pictured this sovereign power of the masses in elemental assertion. None, however, conceived of it as a blind force. Revolution appears as a necessary means to a great end, and the consciousness of this end transfigures the horror of riot with the glory of the spirit: —

Dann schreit' ich jauchzend durch die Welt! Auf meinen Schultern,
stark und breit,

Ein neuer Sankt Christophorus, trag' ich den Christ der neuen Zeit!

Ich bin der Riese, der nicht wankt! Ich bin's durch den zum Siegesfest,
Ueber den tosenden Strom der Zeit der Heiland Geist sich tragen lässt!¹

This joyous rush into revolutionary activity, and revolution as the jubilant emancipator of the people, — those were the new elements which Freiligrath injected into political poetry. It made him the poet of revolution, as a similar joy of combat made Körner the poet of national warfare.

No poet could write in such strains without a burning love for the people and without a passionate confidence in the people. Not a thought of popular follies, not a breath of suspicion that the people could forget in revolt the aims of revolt! And this superb optimism, in the presence of which thoughtful men stand aghast, was not self-deception, — though indeed it was not justified, — but the logical result of Freiligrath's magnificent sympathy for the proletariat. His conceptions of popular energy were not based on intercourse with representatives of the higher classes of society. He did not make the mistake of regarding the cultured and well-to-do as the people. The

¹ My joyous shout peals through the world! Upon my shoulders broad and strong,
A modern Saint Christophorus, the modern Christ I bear along!
The giant I, who never halts! To festal song and jubilee
Over the turbulent flood of time the saviour Spirit is borne by me!

— *Von unten auf!* 11th stanza.

masses are the people, uncultured as well as cultured, toilers in the realm of material production as well as toilers in the spheres of mental activity, poor as well as rich. They all are human beings and they all constitute the people. But the force that realizes the dreams of the spirit, — that force is the proletariat. The poem *From Below Up!* coupled this thought with the thought of civic emancipation. Only through the overthrow of monarchical rule can social emancipation be attained. The grizzled machinist, leaning from his hatchway and muttering imprecations at the royal pair as they pace the deck of the Rhine-steamer, was the typical representative of the “submerged” millions. For all the world one is reminded of a figure of speech originating in our own country on the murky waters of the Mississippi, “The nigger on the safety-valve!” At any moment the imprisoned elements in the boilers beneath may burst their prison walls and hurl the royal passengers to perdition : —

Der Boden birst, aufschlägt die Glut und sprengt Dich krachend in die Luft!
Wir aber steigen feuerfest aufwärts an's Licht aus unsrer Gruft!
Wir sind die Kraft! Wir hämmern jung das alte morsche Ding, den Staat,
Die wir von Gottes Zorne sind bis jetzt das Proletariat!¹

The wars of liberation had borne a new class, the burghers, and the régime of Metternich reared this class to man's estate. The revolution of 1848 was the throes accompanying the birth of a third class, the proletarians, and the following years of industrial expansion and capitalistic greed nursed this class into manhood. With the consciousness of attained majority, it unfurled the banner of social democracy. The pity of it was that through the overweening conceit of aristocratic minds a genuine democratic impulse should have been perverted into a new source of national distraction. Where Freiligrath saw the promise of

¹ The deck heaves up, the flames burst forth, and crashing hurl you in the air!
But we with fiery might break loose, rise up to light from darksome lair.
We are the force! Our youthful blows forge at the old and rotten state,
We, who till now have felt God's curse, we — we, the proletariat!

caste annihilation, a new caste was called into being by aristocratic dictation. The bloodshed of 1848 was only the forerunner of a new struggle, the end of which is not yet.

The coming struggle was grimly foreshadowed in both collections of Freiligrath's *New Political and Social Poems*. A republican form of government was still his war-cry. But in the dark days of the reactionary movement which followed in the footsteps of the revolution, the central thought of democracy gradually lost its hold on the imagination of the poet. Its place was taken by the thought of the material misery and unmerited squalor of the working classes. Freiligrath forgot that *one* class cannot constitute the people. The poems of Thomas Hood ate into his heart and seared his imagination. Revolution descended from its high estate. No longer the emancipator and unifier of all the people, it appeared in these poems far more as the gaunt spectre of proletarianism, as the provider of bread, of clothing, and of shelter. For the time being, Freiligrath became the spokesman of a class and the champion, not merely of the potential right of every human being to equality, but of his absolute right thereto. The guaranty of this right he saw in a republican government, and in so considering government he became the poetic partisan of social democracy. The democrat came near being a demagogue.

Years later, Freiligrath recognized this aberration. When the war of 1870 broke over Germany, the old love of country, of civic unity, and of the social integrity of his people flamed up in his heart. The warm welcome that greeted his return to Germany in 1868 and the generous subscriptions of his countrymen toward a Freiligrath fund took the sting of bitterness out of his life. In October, 1870, he published his collected works with a dedication to his fatherland so warm and true and noble that one feels he had found his way back to the largest conception of democracy. And in this spirit he sang his great song of Germany, "One arm, one heart, one will, one soul!"

Auf, Deutschland, auf, und Gott mit dir!
In's Feld! Der Würfel klirrt!
Wohl schnürt's die Brust uns, denken wir

Des Bluts, das fliessen wird !
 Dennoch das Auge kühn empor !
 Denn siegen wirst du ja :
 Gross, herrlich, frei, wie nie zuvor !
 Hurrah, Germania !
 Hurrah, Victoria !
 Hurrah, Germania ! ¹

That Freiligrath deceived himself or was deceived by outward appearances is beyond the point. He sang as one glad to welcome a better day after a night of tormenting dreams, as one anxious to make amends for deeds well intentioned but begotten of passion gone astray.

The lover of beauty for beauty's sake will still raise his voice against the literary life-work of Büchner, Herwegh, Anastasius Grün, and Freiligrath, and it is well that he should do so. But in doing so, it is also well that he should remember to keep his own criticism within the bounds of the beautiful. Humanly conceived, beauty must always be relative, and he who assumes his own standards to be absolute and applying these standards to the lyrics of revolution, asserts the total absence of beauty therein, is in matters of art a guide far less reliable than these poets were in matters of civic duty. He is indeed farther removed from a true conception of beauty than these men who at least knew where beauty was to be sought,—in the common consciousness of mankind. If that which they found and proclaimed was distorted, it contained at any rate the elements of

¹ Up, Germany, and God with thee !
 War's die will soon be cast !
 Lace on the corselet speedily,
 For blood will flow right fast !
 Thy brave eyes glance the combat o'er,
 As if they vict'ry saw,
 Great, splendid, free as ne'er before,
 Hurrah, Germania !
 Hurrah, Victoria !
 Hurrah, Germania !

— *Hurrah, Germania!* July 25, 1870. Last stanza.

Translation by ELIZABETH CRAIGMYLE.

beauty. Inasmuch as their verse attacked existing forms of government and contended for the substitution of other forms, it perverted abiding values of human aspiration into transient adjuncts. But inasmuch as it was inspired by a passionate desire to give phenomenal reality to these values and recognized in them a reality transcending the realities of political, civic, or social forms, insomuch it was more than verse or exhortation; it was poetry.

CHAPTER X

THE VICTORY OF DEMOCRACY OVER PARTISANSHIP

THREE DEMOCRATIC PHASES OF POETIC REALISM

LUDWIG, WAGNER, HEBBEL

By an odd coincidence, the year 1813 gave to Germany three men whose destiny it was to take up the problem of poetry where Heine left it and to illustrate in their best works the grand possibilities of art upon a democratic basis. Otto Ludwig, Richard Wagner, and Friedrich Hebbel, the great trio of German dramatists, brought the problem of art with which their predecessors, from Kleist to Freiligrath, had wrestled, not to a final conclusion, but many steps nearer to such a conclusion. Their best works established for all times the sanity of artistic ideals that, with less sturdy characters and under more unfavorable conditions, so often lead to suicide or insanity. An artistic affinity bound them to men whose efforts—as in the case of Grabbe, Lenau, or even Heine—seemed to be so strangely at variance with theirs. Often this affinity was recognized by one of the three or by all of them; frequently it was not. They as frequently failed to comprehend the close kinship between their own respective conceptions of art. Some of the harshest criticisms of Hebbel were written by Ludwig; some of the severest strictures of Wagner are found in Hebbel's diary; and of Hebbel's greatest work Wagner had few kind words to say. Yet the aim of all three was the same, though each sought to attain it in a different way, and expressed the artistic results of his striving in a different manner. To discuss this aim in all its bearings lies beyond the bounds of these pages. Stated in broad terms, it led to psychological, metaphysical, and historical symbolism; but with all three to symbolism. They were realists, as Büchner was a realist,—realists

who reproduced with loving exactness the facts of phenomenal life as the revelation of its eternal meaning. They read a meaning out of life, not into life. Life was the symbol of an everlasting and infinite reality, and in treating life as such a symbol they sought, through their art, to bring men nearer to the heart of this reality.

Such catholic sympathy for human relations is of itself evidence of the democratic character of all three poets. The democracy of Ludwig was, however, not the democracy of Wagner; nor was the democracy of Wagner that of Hebbel. In fact, their democracy was as much differentiated as their symbolism. Ludwig sought the democratic forces of life in individual character; Wagner, in legend, myth, or folk-lore; Hebbel, in history. Only with this democratic phase of their poetic growth and attainments are the following pages concerned.

In the spring of 1848, the dark clouds of civic unrest, which for years had been piling up in the heavens, began to emit thunder and lightning. That spring Otto Ludwig welcomed with one of his best lyric poems, *Spring of the People*. All nature sang the glad refrain of a new life: —

Vorbei des Winters Druck und Qual;
Frühling, Frühling auf Berg und Thal,
Der schönste Frühling kommt ins Land,
Freiheit, Freiheit ist er genannt,
Freiheit! o Völkerfrühling! ¹

As if he understood the great significance of the lyric poetry of those revolutionary days, Ludwig exclaimed: —

Du stammelst? Immer stammle fort
Von Licht und Freiheit. Solch ein Wort
Klingt auch gestammelt schön. ²

¹ Withdrawn is Winter's heavy hand;
Springtime smileth on the land,
On hill, on dale, most beauteous Spring!
Freedom! Freedom! Hear it sing!
Freedom! thou springtide of nations!

² You stammer? Stammer on, my friends,
Of light and freedom! For it lends
It beauty e'en to stamm'ring. — *Guter Rat*.

But Ludwig was in no sense a political poet. The few poems that touched on the political problems of his country were merely indicative of the personal relation in which he stood to patriotic ideals. These ideals his poetic consciousness assimilated and reproduced purged of their political tendencies.

The life of Otto Ludwig was simplicity itself, and simplicity he exalted in his poetry. To deserve the title "Poet of the People" was the highest and noblest ambition which, in his estimation, a poet could have. True heroism he could associate only with sublime simplicity of character. With the simple, almost childlike, enjoyment of nature of an Eichendorff, Ludwig combined that more sensitive instinct of an Uhland which discovered the grand significance of a given impression, because it felt the complexity of its determining causes.

Ludwig was a Thuringian, and love of the simple was his birth-right. Most of his life was spent in rural retreat. City life was not to his taste. Its complexity seemed to him artificial, and the beautiful country-side of Thuringia constantly lured him back to its embrace. In 1839 he went to Leipsic to study music under the direction of Felix Mendelssohn. The next year found him back again amid his trees and flowers in the little villa at Eisleben,—all he had saved from the wreck of his father's slender fortune. In 1842 the desire for intercourse with literary men brought him back to Leipsic and took him for a time to Dresden. But two years later his native hills and woodland again called to him with quiet insistency. In Garsebach, a little village near Meissen, nestling in the charming valley of the Triebish, he made his home; and there, with but brief interruptions, he devoted the next five years to literary plans.

Still under the conflicting influences of Hoffmann, Tieck, Fouqué, Brentano, and Schiller, Ludwig wrestled in vain with his own impulsive nature. The haze which obstructed his poetic vision parted only at rare moments. His father had been burgo-master of Eisleben, and this office had placed him and his family in a position to recognize the great conflict being waged between the aristocratic principle of control from above and the democratic principle of self-government. Ludwig had, in his youth,

been forced to feel the effect which this conflict exerted upon men who were drawn into it. Long before poetry claimed him as her own, and when music still held his undivided devotion, he divined what was to be the mission of his poetic striving. Even then he regarded poetry primarily as a moral force. It summons the world before its judgment-seat, tears the mask from the face of the hypocrite, the false halo from the brow of the scoundrel; it dethrones the mighty who make slave-pens of their native lands, and enthrones the lowly who have not desecrated the sanctuary of right. That was the burden of his poem, *The Young Poet* (1832):—

Was edel und nachahmungswert,
Des Menschen Recht und Pflicht—
Das Wort hat ihn ein Gott gelehrt,
Und er verschweigt es nicht.

Der Götterhauch! der Sturmesdrang,
Der mich mir selbst entraf!t!
Was frag' ich viel? was sinn' ich lang?
Gesprüft die junge Kraft!¹

Not until Ludwig had passed his thirtieth year was the conflict between his musical and poetic instinct decided in favor of poetry. During the five years which he spent at Garsebach (1844–1849), he surrendered to the ideals of *The Young Poet*. Plans for a number of revolutionary dramas were sketched, Bürger's ballad, *The Vicar's Daughter of Taubenheim*, was dramatized, and Hoffmann's story, *The Maid of Scudery*, transformed into a dramatic study of the psychology of crime. A third drama, *The Rights of the Heart*, dealt with the problem of love and caste.

¹ Whatso is nobly worth acclaim,
Man's duty and man's right—
That will he evermore proclaim;
A God has touched his sight.

O breath divine! O tempest strong
That snatches me away!
Why question much? Why ponder long?
Put youthful strength in play!

In these dramas it became apparent that their author was endeavoring to analyze and depict individual character as mirroring social truths; that is to say, that he was trying to create character as a human type and not merely as an individual fact. Plainly the poetic genius of Ludwig was herein directed by his inherited instincts. Simplicity appealed to him first and foremost. Compared with the apparent heterogeneity of the mass, an individual was a simple fact, and, starting with this compact organism of individuality, Ludwig dissected the seeming unit. As a result, character became complex, and in its complex nature he sought the elements of the social organism. In this way individual psychology changed into a symbol of mass psychology. But to create a character or characters symbolic of mass character, Ludwig had first to recognize more distinctly the influence of contemporary conditions on individual minds. This the revolution of 1848 helped him to do. And his first great drama owed its greatness to a vision clarified by revolutionary excesses.

The Forester Presumptive, completed in 1849, was not a sudden inspiration. For years Ludwig had ruminated in his solitude to produce such a character as his forester, Christian Ulrich. At least three different sketches were made for the drama between 1846 and 1848, and partially executed. It is altogether likely that none of these — *The Poachers*, *William Brandt*, *A Forest Tragedy* — would have been rounded out into a drama of greater worth than its predecessors, had not the revolution revealed to Ludwig the link that bound this character study of contemporary life to contemporary life. The drama might even have shared the fate of that pitifully large number of dramatic studies which remained uncompleted, all because Ludwig could not reach the point where characters created by his imagination appeared to his critical eye as representative types. With indefatigable perseverance he traced to its source in these studies every phase of an embryonic character. With careful hand he added touches here and touches there, enlarging the original conception. With painful labor he strove to externalize this unit of volition and sentiment

into an active agent of its complex sources. His manuscripts in the Goethe-Schiller Archives at Weimar are the tragic record of an almost superhuman effort to solve the problem that confronted him. Even his two great dramas, *The Forester Presumptive* and *The Maccabees*, failed to weld the individual and his age into a perfectly spontaneous dramatic unit. The unfortunate habit of working backward, from the individual product to the productive mass, instead of working forward from a vision of the creative forces to a vision of the developing psychological creation, was the dramatic undoing of Ludwig. *The Forester Presumptive* and *The Maccabees* were character studies. They were great despite overstudied dramatic action, because the poet succeeded in correlating his original conceptions to collective life. But this correlation was made by his reflective, not by his artistic, faculties.

Anxious as Ludwig was to see the great principle of civic freedom practically realized in the German lands, and warm though his sympathies were for those who were fighting for this end, he perceived with regret the excesses to which the demand for freedom was leading men. Anastasius Grün had recognized that true freedom rested upon a dual basis: reason and instinct. He made the mistake, almost inevitable with a man of his breeding and position, of treating reason as the aristocratic, instinct as the democratic, function of society. Ludwig did not make this mistake. He considered both democratic functions. At variance with this belief, poets were appealing to the passions of the masses. The Young Germans upheld the primacy of the elemental instincts and were now endeavoring to transform into pure poetry the theories of their journalistic propaganda. Gutzkow's *Richard Savage* (1839) and *Uriel Acosta* (1847) enthroned unreasoning instinct. It was coming to be the vogue to consider as infallible the guidance of feeling and to decry as unauthorized every restraint placed on its impulsive rule. But with keen discernment of psychological processes, Ludwig had not failed to perceive the fateful effect of this canonization of the instincts. He had seen love for freedom perverted into a feeling of hatred,

the desire to create new and better conditions degraded to a thirst for vengeance upon those who oppose such conditions. Good and noble men were making an end of means and fretting against every rational modification of the means, because it seemed a falsification of the end.

The letter of Ludwig to Julian Schmidt in which he explained his dramatic intentions in *The Forester Presumptive*, proves how much this prevailing character of the revolutionary movement had to do with the successful dramatization of a theme which had haunted him for years. He wrote: "In *The Forester Presumptive* I have endeavored to show the danger which besets an impulsive man. Reflection serves him all the worse because he imagines himself rid of it. He who consciously disdains reason and tries to discard it falls a prey to sophistry. The heart cannot be the only guide through life, and where a man imagines himself most independent in his one-sidedness, he is in reality most dependent. Consider my drama, if you will, as reversing and complementing the Hamlet problem. Hamlet is a warning example of the preponderance of instinct: where the former cannot credit the clearest of proofs because he seeks, almost instinctively, an excuse for inaction, the other credits the most uncertain and improbable rumors and allows himself to be swayed by a Bible verse, since rumor and verse commend themselves to his brute nature and his desire for vengeance."

Recalling Freiligrath's poem, in which Germany was compared with Hamlet and exhorted to avenge itself for the murder of its liberties, we come, through Ludwig's drama, to appreciate the reverse side of revolution. Because Germany had been a Hamlet was no reason why it should now cast all reflection aside and blindly follow its impulses. To do so could only lead to license, not to freedom. Ludwig's *Forester Presumptive* was a call to rational pursuit of sentimental ideals, an appeal to democratic reason guiding democratic instinct. He wanted democrats, not demagogues. Demagogues he detested; for he believed that demagogism sprang from an immoral conception of individuality in that it treated the individual as an original force in society and not as a product of past and

present social conditions. "Now we have freedom," the poacher exclaims in *The Forester*, "and law and order have ceased; everybody can do as he pleases . . . the inmates of penitentiaries are worthy sufferers, and great folks are rascals, for they are to blame for the poverty of good people who do not like to work. You can read that in print. . . . The people are honest in and of themselves, because they are the people. . . . Poor folks have had a conscience manufactured for them from childhood up, that they might stomach the sight of rich men living on the fat of the land." To this license of demagogism Ludwig opposed the freedom of democracy. He tried to show that moral freedom is possible only when the individual comprehends the social forces that come to expression in his personal self. The clearer he recognizes these social ingredients the greater his freedom. This was the thought that Ludwig endeavored to put into dramatic form in *The Forester*.

In his drama, *The Death of Danton*, Büchner dealt with the mass as a personality; Ludwig created individuals which, by an inverse process, represent the mass. In the centre of these stands his forester, a man of the people, whose forefathers have filled the position of forest warden at an estate recently purchased by a wealthy manufacturer. He claims a vested right to his position, and no reasoning can convince him that his claim has no foundation. Obstinate he insists on his supposed right and believes all ill of those who would deprive him thereof. With well-nigh brutal satisfaction he seizes on the rumor that the son of the new proprietor, the lover of his daughter, has murdered his son. He goes forth to wreak vengeance on the supposed murderer, and inadvertently shoots his own daughter as she steps between father and lover to protect the latter. The catastrophe shows him how all his vaunted sense of justice has gone agley, and he breaks down with the wail, "I was wrong!" Consistent, however, to the end, he sophistically interprets the Old Testament verse, "Whoso sheddeth man's blood, his blood shall by man be shed!" as justifying suicide. His life is blasted and death is a boon.

And since the courts may not grant this boon, he kills himself, for Biblical authority gives him a right to death.

The great difficulty which Ludwig encountered in writing *The Forester Presumptive* was the creation of a dramatic situation in which his characters should act as organic units conditioning and conditioned by the situation. His imagination played him false by first conjuring into existence the individual product of a situation, instead of visualizing the situation and allowing the characters to develop through action and reaction into their final form. Thus it happened that the dramatist was forced to invent for his completed types a dramatic situation. No one recognized more distinctly than the author that in this drama the action seems more like a garment hung about the players. His criticism to the effect that the tragic conflict does not evolve from the depths of their human nature, but seems to depend more upon external causes and momentary impetuosity, must be accepted as just.

The artificial unity of characters and dramatic situation is more painfully apparent when one notes the spontaneous unity of characters and natural atmosphere. Had Ludwig been as sensitive to the unity of human masses as he was to the unity of Thuringian landscape, his characters would have sprung from their human surroundings as organically as they were born the children of the Thuringian forest. The landscape of the play was not artificially adapted to its characters; the characters were of one piece with the scenery of the drama. To say as much of their relation to the dramatic situation is impossible.

Coming to Ludwig's next drama, *The Maccabees*, his greatest and his last, one has only to cast a glance at the list of *dramatis personæ* to be prepared for a different treatment of the dramatic situation. It is not so much the length of this list, as the mass scenes therein indicated, that justifies the inference of superior dramatic solidarity. Nor does the drama belie the promise of its index, though this promise is not fulfilled in its entirety. Again the fatal schism between actors and action made itself felt. Artificial the dramatic action is not, but it is

cut into great halves with Judas Maccabeus as the hero of the first and his mother Leah as the heroine of the second. Despite this result, the poet was nearer the solution of his artistic problem than ever before.

The Maccabees was a character study, but upon a larger scale than *The Forester*. In the earlier tragedy Ludwig analyzed individual character for the purpose of determining the character of society in which he sought its source. In the later drama we find him starting with two poetic postulates: individual character and social character. Studying and analyzing both, he endeavored to present them in their reciprocal relation. So much was evident from the first draft of the drama made in 1850, and continued to be evident in the version of 1851, and the final version of 1852. The dramatic problem was therefore simplified, for the dramatic situation had not to be sought through a process of analysis. It was a primary imaginative fact. But the reciprocal relation of individual character and of mass character was not an imaginative fact. Individual character and mass character were not created by an imagination which saw them spontaneously as forces acting and reacting upon each other. They were separate poetic facts, and their dramatic relation was a construction of the reason. Ludwig had still to contend with an imperfect dramatic vision.

The theme upon which the imagination of Ludwig fastened was the great uprising of the Judean people against Antioch, King of Syria (167-161 B.C.). With the free hand of Schiller and Kleist, Ludwig subordinated specific historical facts to an historical idea. Judas Maccabeus, historically the continuator of the efforts of his father Mattathias to liberate the people, became in Ludwig's drama the instigator of the revolt. The historical butchery of a party of Jewish fugitives, whom the Sabbath law prevented from wielding arms in self-defence, was transferred from an earlier to a later date, and changed from its historical relation of causal incident of revolt to its dramatic relation of incidental effect retarding success. In each version, Ludwig sacrificed historical verities to historical truth, and a comparison of the three versions shows that each

discarded and altered historic facts of previous versions in accord with a more distinctly discerned dramatic reality.

In the first version, the patriotic endeavors of Judas Maccabeus were crossed by the problem of domestic life which the Jewish system of dual marriage created. In fact the patriotic theme was overshadowed by the conflict between Leah, the proud sister-in-law and jealous wife of Judas, and Tirza, the gentle and generous wife of his affections. The climax of the play was reached in the scene where Tirza, in disguise, leads the blinded Leah to Jerusalem. Partly because this domestic problem had lost its force for modern life, partly because it obscured the real conflict which Ludwig had in mind, it was dropped in the second version. Leah was there the mother of Judas Maccabeus, not his wife, and in place of the jealousy of the proud wife was substituted the jealousy of the haughty mother-in-law. Here, too, a domestic problem persisted in claiming the attention of the dramatist at the expense of his real intentions. Once more Ludwig revised his drama. The liberation of a people now became his dramatic theme. Only one scene of the finished drama recalls the first version, the beautiful scene in Act IV where Leah, on her way to Jerusalem, is won over by her daughter-in-law Naomi (Tirza of the former versions), the Rose of Sharon.

The dramatic theme of the *Maccabees*, in its final form, was distinctly and directly concerned with the validity of mass ideals. Without attempting in the least to preach a doctrine of democracy, Ludwig made very evident that mass action is not always consistent with democratic progress. Only when the mass exercises the rational function of judgment in pursuit of sentimental ideals, only then can it be considered true to democratic ideals. Dramatically Ludwig presented this idea in a series of heroic characters. His dominant hero was the Jewish people. This people included, as hero in a narrower sense, the family of the Maccabees, which in its domestic ideals and conflicts reflected the virtues and foibles of nationality. And again within this family, the interest of the poet concentrated on two concrete, individual types of popular leadership: Judas Macca-

beus, the warm-hearted, impulsive and yet enlightened patriot, and his mother Leah, the clear-sighted, unflinching, and superb exponent of democratic heroism.

In this triple gradation — nation, family, individual — Ludwig traced the psychological action of democratic forces. The problem to be solved was in brief: the attainment of that national destiny which the Jewish people considered its divine right. Ludwig postulated this end as a democratic ideal, as an instinctive longing of the people. He also postulated — and both postulates rest upon historic truth — the absence of rational activity in the masses. Trained in absolute reverence for law and through this training held in the bondage of authority, the popular instinct for freedom is nullified by enslaved reason. Rational self-reliance is stunted by irrational reliance on a national deity who has promised to raise his people above other peoples of the world and who will, in pursuance of his promise, send them a saviour to confound the oppressor. This conflict between popular impulse and popular inertia is the backbone of the drama.

When Ludwig's *Forester* was completed and put on the stage, the poet realized that his imagination demanded a schooling which only the large world of active social effort and conflicting social ideals could supply. He removed to Dresden. The lonely thinker plunged into city life, where the great conflicts of the day centred. It hardly needs to be stated that this change enlarged his poetic horizon and enabled him in *The Maccabees* to realize directly, and without the process of minute analysis, the unity of mass character. In those three years of toiling with this drama, he was also confronted with the failure of the revolution. Spasmodic passion had quickly spent itself. Germany was not ready for revolt. Once more reactionary measures, called forth by mob-rule, threatened to deprive the country of its hopes, and once more freedom seemed to earnest patriots to be an impractical dream. By hundreds the young men of Germany, the flower of its democratic chivalry, fled from the vengeance of autocrats and sought a new home and a new fatherland where civic freedom meant rational progress.

These disheartening conditions imparted vitality to the dramatic conception of Ludwig. Judas Maccabeus became the type of those hot-headed patriotic agitators who believed that freedom could be gained by merely arousing the people and who welcomed every new form of oppression as productive of energy. As such an agitator, Judas fails to see that energy set free by passion is only destructive and not productive. In the first act he seems like an ancient prototype of Heinrich Heine. We note the same deep love of country veiled in bitter cynicism, the same insight into the mental sloth of his countrymen, the same effort to rouse their self-respect through unmerciful castigation of their faults, the same misconception of their reverence for dead forms. When the measure of endurance is full, Judas is the one who turns overflowing hate into deeds and leads the people to victory. But when the crucial test comes, he learns that senseless reverence for authority, the national folly of his people, is mightier than the forces he has relied upon. The labor of years and the one purpose of his life are brushed aside by the breath of a fool. In vain he implores the fanatic Jojakim to be reasonable and to urge upon the people a reasonable interpretation of the Sabbath law. The priest will none of it, and the people prefer defeat to victory, if victory can be gained only by the sacrifice of cherished traditions. The words of Judas at the beginning of the revolt, "First help me to carry it out, then I will *consider!*" bear their legitimate fruit. He has fought only with the weapons of instinct, and he is defeated by sophistry which turns these weapons against him.

At this point in the drama, the star of Leah begins to rise. Originally guided by motives of family pride and ambition, she now faces the ruin of all her selfish hopes. Intrigue, which she had supposed more rational than impulsive action, has recoiled upon her. Eleazor, the son whom she thought to elevate, has succumbed to the wiles of the Syrian court. He is a traitor to the cause. Judas, to whom Leah transferred her hopes, has been defeated, and is a wanderer in the land, striving to reunite his scattered following. All her other sons are in the power of Antioch of Syria, now encamped before

Jerusalem, where starvation makes surrender seem only a question of days. Leah's own people have cursed her and cast her out. No one remains to cheer her. Only despised Naomi, the lowly Shumite, and the incarnation of simplicity, is true. Through her the broken-hearted woman is saved from despair. The revelation of the pure and simple love of Naomi opens Leah's eyes to the scheming selfishness of her past ambition and purges this ambition of its dross. Weak though she is, she refuses to let Naomi accompany her into the hostile camp, whither she goes to plead for the lives of her sons; the beautiful wife of her son shall not be exposed to the insults of the soldiery. And in this spirit she comes to Antioch and hears his decree: Life for her children if they renounce the heritage of their fathers, death by torture if they refuse! Once Leah would have urged artful submission, as once she defended the action of Eleazor. Now the grand import of the divine mission of her race has taken complete possession of her. Craft and cunning have been sloughed off, and with the simple, unerring directness of Naomi, the heroic nature of the woman asserts its sway. Let her children die! Steadfast, true to their faith! Victorious even in death! She herself encourages them in their refusal to recant, and her superb sacrifice makes even of the traitor Eleazor a champion of Israel. He takes his place among his brothers and suffers the penalty. But this sacrifice of her beloved brings freedom to her country. It sets before Antioch the Jewish popular ideal in all its sublimity, and forces him to respect a people capable of such a magnificent conception of its destiny, and of such a superb sacrifice in its behalf. He declares his intention to withdraw from the country. At that moment Judas sallies forth from Jerusalem and surprises the Syrian camp. He has put new heart into his people. But the victory is already won. Not Judas,—Leah has conquered. Antioch is permitted to depart in peace, that a renewed combat may not jeopardize the victory Leah has gained through the death of her children.

The Maccabees was the last drama which Ludwig completed. The necessity of increasing his slender means induced him to

enter on a more promising literary field,—the novel or rather short story. Two of his stories, *Sunshine and Mirth* (Die Heiterethei, 1855) and *Between Heaven and Earth*, rank among the best novelistic studies of the nineteenth century. Both were character studies, woven out of the foibles and sterling traits of Thuringian life, and in both the sympathy of the poet for *bourgeois* life proved how substantial was the basis on which his democracy rested. Particularly is this true of *Between Heaven and Earth*. He found the life of the lowly as sublime in its possibilities of failure and success, and as responsive to the eternal ideals of truth and righteousness, as other poets had found the lives of great men and women. Neither story stood in any direct relation to the civic problem of German life; but both—one from its cheerful, the other from its tragic, side—poetized the life of the common people.

With these works the poetic attainments of Otto Ludwig came to an end. His poetic striving did not cease, but it resulted in no finished work. When he again began to devote himself to dramatic writing, the thought seems to have haunted him that there existed a secret law of dramatic creativeness which he had not yet fathomed. Herein he was right, though he was wrong in supposing that this law was capable of analysis, and that, with such an analysis once established, his dramatic genius would be free to produce still greater works. Accepting Shakespeare as the absolute standard of dramatic art, he proceeded to the most minute dissection of his dramas, but without gaining in dramatic power. For what he found was not the great law of spontaneous creativeness; it was only the method of the playwright, or at best the poetic evidences of this law. And so he wasted the last years of his life in futile endeavors. Plans and sketches, carefully constructed in accord with the methods which his searching analysis revealed to him, never felt the inspiring touch of poetry. Some new cataclysm in German life might have awakened the slumbering fires of his genius, as the revolution had, all unbeknown to the poet, brought him nearer to the solution of the problem of his dramatic endeavors. But this was not to be. The star of Ludwig

could not shine in the stolid days of reaction. With heroic patience, such as few of the great poets of Germany have shown, he bore the physical suffering of his last days and the mental anguish of his defeat. Truth and beauty, phenomenal reality transfigured by the eternal essence — such was art, and such art he longed to give to his country.

Wie beengen diese Räume,
Diese Hügel, diese Berge!
Wirbeln möcht' ich mit der Lerche
Hoch im Blauen meine Träume.

O wie eng, wie blass die Nähe!
Wer die weite, gold'ne Ferne,
Wer die weiten, gold'nen Sterne
Unter seinen Füßen sähe! ¹

Much as Ludwig's dramas dwelt with psychological problems of life and the conflicting claims of reason and instinct, they were totally different from Grillparzer's. The centre of Ludwig's vision was objective life, the centre of Grillparzer's was subjective life. Ludwig conceived his individuals as representatives of their day, as types of democratic forces. Grillparzer realized his only as characteristic manifestations, as personal entities antagonizing impersonal forces. Therefore the conflict between reason and instinct presented itself to Grillparzer as peculiar only to individual existence, and made the characters he created bizarre and eccentric. To Ludwig this conflict appeared intrinsic to social life and its solution the ideal of democracy.

¹ How this narrow space confines me,
Yonder hillsides, yonder mountains!
Oh, to carol forth my dreaming
Larklike in the blue of heaven!

Oh, how small, how pale the near-by!
Once to see the far-off distance,
And to see the far-off starlight
Golden 'neath my feet expanding!

— *Des Kranken Ungeduld*, 2d and 3d stanzas.

A similar conception of life shaped the artistic career of Richard Wagner. The revolution did him much the same service that it did Ludwig. But this service was done in a different way to a different temperament, and therefore led to different results. Ludwig's two great dramas were a most subtle mingling of optimism and pessimism. Directly democracy triumphed in neither drama. *The Maccabees* reminds one far more of Immermann's *Tragedy in the Tyrol* than it does of Schiller's *William Tell*. Its democracy is an ideal reality. The Jewish people does not, in Ludwig's drama, attain freedom through its own efforts, for its ideal of freedom has not the support of its rational faculties. In Leah the national ideal manifests itself sentimentally *and* rationally. Only this perfect individual incarnation wins the final victory. This is the pessimistic qualification of the democratic optimism of Ludwig. At heart he was optimistic. The ideal which becomes a reality in Leah is drawn from popular life, and vitally effective only because its source is there and not in Leah, at least in her only in so far as she is identified with her nation. In and through her personality it is clarified and purged of sophistry. The pessimism of Wagner was far more fundamental than that of Ludwig. Of Ludwig it might be said that his optimism was temperamental and his pessimism theoretical. Wagner was by temperament pessimistic and optimistic in theory. His art is fully appreciated only by those who recognize the pessimistic source of its optimistic purpose.

Like every great artist, Wagner passed his novitiate in the school of convention. As an artist—for it is not possible to separate in this connection the musical and poetic development of Wagner—he continued a scholar until the outbreak of the revolution. Not until he was forced to flee to Switzerland (1849) could he completely free his genius from established canons of art, though he had constantly been drawing nearer to the point where the final rupture became inevitable. *Rienzi*, *The Flying Dutchman*, *Tannhäuser*, and *Lohengrin* were as many efforts to breast the pessimistic current of his temperament

with the aid of conventional art. *Rienzi* was a fierce bid for fame and power, conceived during the dreary days at Riga, where Wagner, then (1839) leader of a small operatic troupe, fretted miserably in his cramped pecuniary, social, and artistic position. Inordinate ambition and well-nigh prodigious self-conceit took him to Paris. Here utter failure and the gaunt spectre of starvation stared him in the face. Under the blows of adversity, selfish ambition lost its hold on Wagner. The heartache of failure changed conceit into self-respect. With a nobler conception of art he poured forth the troubles of his heart in song. Unconsciously working with conventional ideas, he yet consciously strove to give only himself. *The Flying Dutchman* was an act of emancipation. It was followed in *Tannhäuser* and *Lohengrin* by an attempt to reform conventional ideas. From the wholly subjective treatment of the human type in *The Flying Dutchman*, Wagner proceeded to create objective types. In contrast to the artistic impulse guiding him in *The Flying Dutchman*, which emanated from a feeling of utter disparity between himself and society, the artistic impulse controlling *Tannhäuser* and *Lohengrin* sprang from a growing consciousness of the insufficiency of the individual type. The highest ideals of life began to appear to Wagner beyond the reach of individual striving. His art was passing through a phase peculiar to every great artistic volition at some moment of its growth. Pessimism and optimism were locked in a death struggle. From this struggle the artist emerged triumphant to champion thenceforth the self-redemption of life. And his victory was even more closely related to the revolutionary upheaval in Germany than were the poetic achievements of Ludwig in *The Forester* and *The Maccabees*.

Wagner did not, as kindred spirits before him, become a great expounder of pessimism. He found, or thought he found, the path leading from pessimism to rational artistic optimism. Through negation of individual finality, he came to affirm democratic finality as the only consummation of the divinity of man. This affirmation, however, was made by the musician, not by the poet.

From Paris Wagner returned to Dresden, where he was appointed conductor of the royal opera. *Tannhäuser* and *Lohengrin* met on the whole with small success. The press in particular assumed a hostile, almost violent, attitude, and only a few intimate friends responded sympathetically to his high ideals for purifying and elevating the stage. This general indifference to his aims made Wagner morbidly discontented with social conditions. Anything seemed better than the stolid apathy which characterized German society. A sense of isolation bore him to the earth and paralyzed his artistic faculty. Tremendously in earnest in his efforts to make art an ethical force in civilization, he craved stimulating companionship with the community of men. Conventional forms made this companionship impossible, and obscured the poetic significance of his environment.

Then came the years of revolutionary agitation, followed by the civic revolt of 1848 and 1849. Though no politician, Wagner could not help feeling that the struggle for freedom involved in its victory a defeat of conventional art ideals. Furthermore, the banding together of men for attainment of civic emancipation caused him to see that the paramount ideals of life do not find their typical expression in the individual, but in the community. With word and deed, he identified himself with the revolutionists. The pamphlet *Art and Revolution* was his critical contribution to revolutionary literature, and the sincerity of his views was betokened by his active participation in revolutionary organizations at Dresden.

Here again it is to be noted, that pessimism provided the basis for his revolutionary theory of art and made this theory optimistic. "Art is pure joy — joy in existence, joy in community." That was his optimistic theory. He argued that Greek art was the expression of a highly developed communal conscience, and therefore in its essence conservative. Modern society he believed to be without a communal conscience, and he therefore held that modern art (*i.e.* German art, or rather his art) could develop only in conscious opposition to modern society. It must be revolutionary. From a thoroughly pessi-

mistic conception of contemporary society, Wagner arrived at his optimistic theory of art.

That Wagner thereby entangled himself in a fatal contradiction must be evident. His subjective bias induced him to postulate a democratic source for all truly satisfying artistic expression and against this assumption, drawn from his personal experience, one has no desire to protest. But the theoretical democracy of Wagner clashed with his practical isolation, and his theory of democratic art conflicted with his aristocratic practice. Logically he should have argued: if Greek art was great because of the correlation of artistic and communal ideals, then modern art can be great only if it can find and express the ideals of modern society. Instead he argued from altogether subjective premises. His own personal ideals he set up as the only true social ideals, and not finding these ideals in the communal life of his day, he proceeded to decry this life instead of admitting the insufficiency of his artistic insight.

Whatever may be said for or against Wagner as a creative artist, he did not solve the problem of democratic *poetry* or advance it any nearer to a solution. Nor could he do so. His pessimistic estimate of contemporary life made him revert to the distant past of the German race and treat folk-lore and myth as the great evidences of the artistic instinct of his nation. In the choice of his dramatic themes, and even more so in their poetic treatment, Wagner was a thoroughgoing romanticist. Likewise his singularly sentimental discussions of civic and social problems were as romantically hazy as anything that came from Novalis, the Schlegels, or Schelling. In these discussions modern life seems almost a negligible quantity, like a night of dreams separating the bright daylight of the long ago from the happy dawn of another far-off day. The genius of Wagner was musical and not poetic. He placed feeling above cognition, the immediate reproduction of an effect through music above its mediate expression through mental images. "Feeling," he once asserted, "is the beginning and the end of understanding, and tone-language the beginning and end of word-language."

One is at once reminded of similar statements made by Wackenroder and other romanticists. Wagner was, therefore, qualified to phrase in terms of music the mystic longing of modern life, but he was not qualified to transform the imperfect forms of social being into poetic visions of its recondite consciousness. So it happened that the poet was out of touch with the present, the musician close to its throbbing heart.

Wagner interpreted the ancient myths of Germany as poetic creations of the popular imagination and these poetic creations as direct embodiments of a sublime awe felt by primitive society. He constructed a cycle of music dramas, *The Nibelungen Ring*, in which the attempted unity of poetry and music was in so far unattained, as the poetic conception remained a mere allegory, while the musical theme rose to the higher level of symbolic art. In other words: the word-language of *Rhinegold*, *The Valkyrie*, *Siegfried*, and *The Dawn of the Gods* only garbed metaphysical ideas of life in terms of mythology, but the tone-language reproduced life as a transcendental fact. Wagner read his own philosophy of life into the ancient myth; but his music phrased the immortal longing of the human soul for a perfect union with the soul of life. "All creation longeth for the manifestation of the sons of God"—these words of Paul best characterize the music of these dramas. Wonderfully sympathetic in the presence of social misery, Wagner succeeded in encompassing it with his feelings, but not with his poetic vision. His own words judge him: "No step in advance is more pregnant with success than that from reflecting like a philosopher to seeing like a dramatist. To see, to see, really to see, here is where they all fail!" How little he knew what "seeing like a dramatist" means appears from the letter which contains this statement. He saw as a musician; and with the eyes of a musician, albeit a democratic musician, he looked at the social sorrow of modern life. As a musician he felt the presence of regenerative agencies; but as a poet he lacked the power to descry the dramatic activity of these agencies.

At this point the contrast between Wagner and Ludwig is greatest. Ludwig's *people* was a phenomenal reality cherish-

ing collective ideals, though constantly hampered in the realization of these by the absence of rational coöperation. Wagner's *people* was a transcendental idea. His human eyes saw "culture-bespectacled" egotists and uncultured common men; selfish, wasteful idlers and a toiling, ill-favored multitude; artificial civilizers and the mob as "the direct reflex of the grimaces of State and criminal culture." Yet he exclaimed, "Neither the pampered few nor the vulgar mob do we mean when we speak of the people." He was right. His *people* was a Platonic idea, and in speaking of this people as "the artists of the future," he, as a poet, was merely revolving on the same spot. Music may express the unseen presence of such a transcendental reality hidden away under the degrading and degraded forms of modern society; poetry cannot.

It is not surprising, therefore, that Immermann's lofty conception of love found no place in *Tristan and Isolde*, Wagner's music drama of love's penance and extenuation, nor, on the other hand, is it surprising that in *The Mastersingers* Wagner produced far and away his best poetic drama. For once we find him presenting the flesh and bone of ideas and not their shadowy spectres. His imagination carried him back into the sturdy days of burgher activity, at a moment when the afterglow of popular life, by Wagner assumed to have been his Platonic idea once realized, still lends its parting glory to communal life. Wagner wrote the drama in his wonted disdain of modern life, and in the conviction that with the passing of the mastersingers, the last visible evidences of communal aspiration had vanished. But to us the play represents the ideal truths of democracy far more poetically than any other work of Wagner.

That, under the circumstances, Wagner finally came to champion the views of Schopenhauer and in this championship fell a prey to mystical speculation seems natural. *Parcival* may find a place in the discussion of the transcendental aims of poetry. With the democracy of active life and sturdy human progress it has little in common. For democracy does not preach the gospel of unselfishness as identical with the doctrine of self-negation.

When one reads the communistic confessions of Wagner, particularly in regard to the right of private property, one is justly amazed at the slight reference to these theories in his dramatic texts. This was the artistic triumph of Wagner. A few of his reflections will serve to show how great was this triumph. Outstripping in his social philosophy the poets of revolution, he yet remained true to the art instinct of his nature. Of the Nibelungen myth and the curse therein resting on the possessor of the Rhinegold, he wrote: "While in the remotest antiquity the natural and simple principle obtained of regulating the measure of the right of possession or of enjoyment in accordance with the needs, not the luxurious cravings of the individual, it was no less natural that among conquering races, wherever there was an excess of spoils, the might and daring of the most famous warrior should be deemed to entitle him to a richer and more luxurious share. In the historic application of the feudal system we still see, as long as it lasted in its original purity, the heroic-man principle distinctly expressed. . . . From the instant that fiefs became subject to inheritance, men, as regards personal valor and deeds, lost in worth, this passing over to their possessions instead . . . and the consequently steadily deeper depreciation of the man over against the steadily higher appreciation of his possessions, was finally embodied in the most inhuman arrangements, such as the right of primogeniture. It is from this strangely reversed order of things that the later nobility have imbibed all their arrogance and pride, without considering that just because their worth is derived from petrified family possessions, they have openly denied and rejected real human nobility. But what a cruelly inhuman form the right of private property now assumes in our haggling world of machine factories, in which, to speak precisely, workmen are men only to the extent which the demands of capital will permit." "Our God is gold: and money-getting is our religion." "And now according to the conscience of the state, property has greater sanctity than religion."

It is indeed remarkable that Wagner could hold such views of the sordid ethics of contemporary society, and keep his

cycle *The Nibelungen Ring* free from polemic preaching. Partisanship succumbed to artistic instinct, and though the poet failed of plastic conceptions of the highest order, the feeling of the brotherhood of man found expression in the shadowy forms of his visions and preëminently in the language of his music.

Ludwig, Wagner, and Hebbel, the great trio of German dramatists, standing on the threshold of conscious democracy, consciously correlated their art to contemporary life. All three saw in art a redeeming force, all three regarded themselves as disciples of a new gospel. They were "Knights of the Holy Ghost," champions of the intrinsic divinity of the race, and though neither applied to himself the term coined by Heine, each was conscious of having been called to fulfil a mission of redemption, much as Heine was conscious of a similar artistic mission in the last years of his life. Peculiarly significant, therefore, is the fact that in all three men the musical instinct was the first appealed to and the first to be aroused. They felt before they saw. In the case of Wagner this statement goes without saying. Indeed, he hardly ever came to see dramatically and only on rare occasions lyrically. Ludwig declared he heard with the inner ear before he saw with the inner vision. His poetic sight was preceded by a "musical sensation" (*musikalische Stimmung*). Gradually this changed to a color sensation, and then into a vision of momentary scenes and groups of individuals in definite postures, which increased in number until in a series of mimic situations the scenic drama was complete. To these pictures the connecting action was invented. In view of the conflict between music and poetry which for so many years made Ludwig artistically nonproductive, one can well credit this analysis of the genesis of his poetic imagination. That such a "musical sensation" should at any time have preceded and often accompanied the process of dramatic conception with a nature so combative, strenuous, and harsh in many of its poetic utterances as was that of Friedrich Hebbel seems less credible. But he, too, speaks of its presence as a premonitory

sign of poetic travail. Furthermore, the poetic development of Hebbel, which in its general lines may be said to have progressed from lyric poetry through epic description to dramatic conception, strongly supports his introspective assertion.

This primacy of the feelings in all three men is accounted for by their exceeding great susceptibility for the problematical aspects of modern society. Neither was primarily interested in individual forms as single, isolated facts, but in the plurality of such forms as great units. The social phase of existence challenged their creative powers. They felt that a common impulse quickened the seemingly erratic and inconsistent activities of modern life. Wagner never succeeded in focussing his poetic vision on the artistically amorphous manifestation of this common impulse. His artistic perception was that of a musician. Even when Wagner thought himself a poet, only the musician perceived form in the formless. The musical intuition of Ludwig was less quick and penetrating. Feeling a greater need to supplement his artistic perception by keener poetic discernment, he trained the faculty of poetic sight. Wagner could not do this because he identified the inner eye with the inner ear. But Ludwig's poetic vision never encompassed the great reality which confronted his artistic senses. He disciplined the analytical, not the comprehensive, synthetic powers of sight. He trained the poetic eye as a supplementary artistic organ, not as an independent organ. However keen his vision became, it always lacked the power of independent insight, *i.e.* the power of seeing its object as a whole as well as in its parts. The musical sense of Hebbel was never originally creative. His experiences of life never gave rise to original musical sensations. These were always borrowed. Some musical theme, some tune or strain, heretofore heard, would associate itself with an experience that appealed to his artistic sense, and in this borrowed music his feelings held, as it were, a personal experience at arm's-length until his poetic sight became focussed on it as an integral part of common human experience. Hebbel by no means produced the works of his earlier life in this manner. Indeed it was a characteristic fea-

ture only of his last years, of the period in which his great trilogy, *The Nibelungen*, was written.

No German poet — not Kleist, not Grillparzer, not Lenau, not Ludwig — wrestled more ardently than did Hebbel for the crowning blessing of poetry. The reader of Hebbel's diary recalls involuntarily the Old Testament story of Jacob wrestling with the angel. Hebbel, too, was lamed, but the blessing was his.

When Wagner wrote at the turning-point of his career "that not the individual, but alone the community can perform deeds of art the reality of which is immediately apprehended by the senses," he meant to assert that the artist must be able to feel and see his subjective ideal as the correlate of the actual interests of the community. This was the substance of the art problem that confronted Hebbel and Ludwig, and in fact every great poet of the nineteenth century. Only in one essential did the striving of Hebbel differ from that of Wagner. Instead of correlating his subjective ideals to the actual interests of the community, he sought to have them agree with its potential interests. The attainment of "inner form," with which Immermann was first concerned and which was the *ultima thule* of the poetic ambition of Hebbel, became of such paramount importance because "inner form" meant that quality of poetic beauty which has its source in a perfect harmony between personal experience and the experience of the world at large.

It would be difficult to imagine a more profoundly democratic conception of the nature of poetry than that implied in this term "inner form." It placed the poet in that vicarious relation to life where at the moment of poetic creation the subconscious forces of social life become conscious forces in his poetic imagination, and reproduce in perfect form the imperfect forms attained in the world of appearances. Feeling the presence of such subconscious forces is a different proposition from seeing them at work moulding society. Wagner felt this presence. To analyze their nature and work by rational processes is not equivalent to poetic seeing. Ludwig sought poetic sight by way of analysis. To see life as the conscious expression of

a living idea, that was the poetic travail of Hebbel, and it was so prolonged and painful because the embroilment of German life gave so little evidence of purposeful development and made its energizing elements so elusive. To read into this life an idea of purely subjective origin was so easy; to read out of it an objective idea so difficult. And this difficulty forced Hebbel out of the drama of contemporary life into the drama of race history.

Hebbel was an autodidact, as was Ludwig and was Wagner. The fact has its significance in that it shows the control which feeling had over all three. They were unwilling to develop otherwise than in accord with their instinctive volition. Unquestionably they forfeited thereby a certain power of mental combination, but as unquestionably gained a greater power of artistic combination. The lowly birth of Hebbel, the total lack of systematic training, the pinch of poverty, and the sombre landscape of his native moorlands on the west coast of Holstein, reacted with baneful effect on his sensitive temperament. Even as a child the habit grew on him of brooding with vacant mind and full heart over the vastness of nature. This sense of self in contrast to a universal substance haunted him until late in life, and his poetic growth is most easily traced in the poetic treatment accorded this theme. To unite self and nature in a single vision, to see himself as a part of this overpowering reality of non-self without forfeiting the sense of personal being, and then to fix this vision in terms of speech—that was the first artistic problem which presented itself to Hebbel. It was, therefore, purely poetic. And the fact that cosmic life and not the social life of man came as the first contrast to self, accounts largely for his poetic solution of the social problems of contemporary life in a great vision of the progress of civilization.

From a large number of poems, all concerned with the theme of personal life in contrast to universal nature, four may be singled out as characteristic of the four periods of the poetic growth of Hebbel. In each the awe felt by the poet beneath the mighty canopy of the night is the poetic theme. The story of the life of Hebbel is woven in with these four poems : *God*,

written in Wesselburen, the poet's birthplace, in 1832; *Song of the Night*, composed by him in 1836 as a student at Heidelberg; *To My Soul*, born of the agony of his fruitless struggle in Hamburg, 1840; and *The Benediction of the Night*, Vienna, 1856, phrasing the calm peace of one at rest.

Between the last two dates Hebbel's poetic vision was fixed on immediate civic and social problems. Five dramas, neither of which satisfied his artistic temper, were completed in these years: *The Diamond* (1842-1845), a comedy; *Mary Magdalene* (1843), a *bourgeois* tragedy; *Julia* (1847), a tragedy of social degeneracy; *Tragedy in Sicily* (1847), a serio-comic picture of a Police State; and *Agnes Bernauer* (1851), a tragedy concerned with the problem Kleist had avoided in *Katie of Heilbron*. Just previous to these writings and under the pressure of the unsolved cosmic problem of life, Hebbel constructed a theoretical world drama in which the great conflicts in the history of civilization were to become concrete dramatic facts. *Judith* (1840), *Genoveva* (1841), and the dramatic fragments *Moloch* and *Christ* were attempts to realize this theory. *Herod* (1848) continued these efforts though with less conscious purpose. Historic facts were seen with greater distinctness. Finally *Gyges and His Ring* (1854) condensed the tragic themes of all previous works: the vanity of every attempt inconsistent with the spiritual condition of the social order wherein the individual moves. In this drama Hebbel enunciated the principle that aristocratic leadership not merely fails in reforming life, but engenders in the reformer a disastrous conflict between personal feeling and impersonal volition. In *Gyges* Hebbel buried his theories of what life should be, and thereafter tried to see it merely as it was. The Nibelungen legend opened a vista into a period of human history in which pagan and Christian civilization were engaged in a final conflict. This conflict Hebbel endeavored to reproduce as a dramatic reality symbolic of the steady, world-historic progress of civilization, never concluded and always marching on in great epochal strides to a fuller realization of the eternal truth.

To appreciate the democratic significance of Hebbel's dramatic

works one needs to realize the full significance of his interpretation of "inner form." For, considered superficially, his dramas seem to reflect an extreme aristocracy of temperament, and to proclaim the individual as the source of all true greatness and progress.

Incredibly harsh conditions of early life made Hebbel excessively self-reliant and imperious in his dealings with others, but they also isolated him so completely from social intercourse that he was, in a measure, forced into an *a priori* conception of a duality in existence: the individual, — Hebbel; and the universal, — nature. But the very folly of his sentimental division of life into Hebbel and all the rest of existence proved his salvation. For though he felt this world of non-self as an oppressive burden negating his personality, and for that reason clung the more stubbornly to his sense of individual existence, yet this very feeling in time transformed the vast impersonal world into a mighty personality.

In the first period of his poetic growth this world of non-self was the world of inanimate, impersonal nature. Behind its unconscious forms, Hebbel felt the presence of a conscious life imposing itself on and engulfing his consciousness. In the poem, *God*, this feeling predominated, and the young poet could find no escape except by transferring into the phenomena of nature which occasioned it, a philosophic idea drawn from the song of the three Archangels in Goethe's *Faust*. From simple feeling he took refuge to reflection by comparing Goethe's poetic vision with his own emotional vision of the night:—

Wenn Stürme brausen, Blitze schmettern,
 Der Donner durch die Himmel kracht,
 Da les' ich in des Weltbuchs Blättern
 Das dunkle Wort von Gottes Macht;
 Da wird von innern Ungewittern
 Das Herz auch in der Brust bewegt:
 Ich kann nicht beten, kann nur zittern
 Vor Ihm, der Blitz und Sturm erregt.

 Doch wenn ein sanfter, stiller Abend,
 Als wie ein Hauch aus Gottes Mund,
 Beschwichtigend und mild erlabend,

Herniedersinkt auf's Erdenrund;
 Da wird erhellt jedwedes Döster,
 Das sich gedrängt ums Herz herum:
 Da werde ich ein Hoherpriester,
 Darf treten in das Heiligtum.

Da sehe ich der Allmacht Blüte,
 Die Welten labt mit ihrem Duft:
 Die ewig wandellose Güte,
 Die Lampe in der Totengruft;
 Da höre ich der Seraphime
 Erhabensten Gesang von fern;
 Da sauge ich wie eine Biene,
 Am Blumenkelch, an Gott, dem Herrn!¹

Hebbel's earliest works are full of the terror of loneliness. From this he endeavored to escape, not by seeing in nature a manifestation of redemptive forces, but by interpreting nature

¹ When storms rage fierce, and lightning flashes,
 When thunders through the heavens crash,
 Then in the world-book's pages read I
 The mystic word of God's great might;
 Then by tempestuous thoughts within me
 My soul is tossed to and fro:
 I cannot pray, can only tremble
 When storm and lightning He ordains.

But when a quiet, gentle evening,
 Breathed, as it were, from God's own lips,
 Brings comfort sweet in its descending
 And cheer to all the world around;
 Then changed to light is all the darkness
 That crowded in upon my soul;
 A high priest I am consecrated,
 May enter in the sacred shrine.

Then I behold the flower of Almighty
 Refreshing worlds with rare perfume:
 Love — never falt'ring, never changing,
 The lamp that burneth in the tomb;
 Then from afar I hear the chanting
 Of Seraphims' sublimest songs;
 Then, like a bee, I suck the honey
 From the flower's heart, from God, the Lord.

through visions which had come to others. Consequently he neither reproduced the phenomena which affected him, nor the ideal presence which he felt they expressed.

In Heidelberg we find Hebbel in a second stage of his æsthetic growth. He tried to understand his loneliness. Life had dealt him bitter blows. He lived alone, and purposely alone, isolating himself with dogged perversity. At the same time the social instinct made itself more strongly felt, and the extreme consciousness of his personal existence transformed the vague sense of an impersonal universe into a definite conception of a universal personality. His life and the life which enveloped him—they were now two distinct personal realities in his mind. The two ideas he could not reconcile, but they were so closely related that he could be conscious of his individual existence only as he was conscious of its opposite. The idea of universal life was born as the antithesis to personal being. This conflict of two exclusive ideas in turn intensified his emotional longing. Hebbel felt that there must exist a harmony of both, and since he could not grasp this harmony, he fell a prey to that most fearful distraction, which he called his “fatal sickness.”

In his morbid moods Hebbel was wont to ascend to the castle terrace at nightfall and watch the stars come forth. Once he wrote in his diary: “How the starry heavens can swell the human breast I fail to comprehend. In me they dissolve the sense of personality. I cannot suppose that nature would go to the trouble of preserving my miserable ego in all its frailty.” And again: “Often I have a feeling as if we human beings, *i.e.* each individual, stood so infinitely alone in the All, that not even of each other did we know the least, and that all our love and friendship could be likened to grains of sand driven about by the wind.” In such a mood he composed the *Song of the Night*:—

Quellende, schwellende Nacht,
Voll von Lichtern und Sternen;
In den ewigen Fernen,
Sage, was ist da erwacht?

Herz in der Brust wird beengt,
 Steigendes, neigendes Leben,
 Riesenhaft fühle ich's weben,
 Welches das meine verdrängt.
 Schlaf, da nahst du dich leis,
 Wie dem Kinde die Amme,
 Und um die dürftige Flamme
 Ziehst du den schützenden Kreis.¹

Even the layman in matters æsthetic will recognize that the poem is but a metrical statement of the emotional conflict through which Hebbel was passing. There is apparently no attempt to read into the night a meaning it had not acquired for the poet through personal experience, or to read into it the thoughts of another. The night is the symbol of the vast, conscious universe. But the oppressive effect of this anti-thetical life upon Hebbel's consciousness of self forced him into reflection. Here then we observe the first important step toward poetic seeing. The poet visualized that phase of nature-life which made him conscious of his loneliness. For it was the night that challenged his uncompromising sense of personal being. In the first stanza the vision of the night, as a conscious reality, is perfect. But no vision was vouchsafed the poet of his personal relation to the night.

All of Hebbel's poems of the second period are open to the same criticism. His visions were constantly interrupted by a conscious contrast between self and the object seen poetically.

There followed an untiring effort to see the two great anti-

¹ Quivering, quickening night,
 In yon spaces eternal,
 Tell me, what new life supernal
 Stirs 'mid your stars' limpid light.
 Cramped is the heart in my breast;
 Life, ever surging and verging,
 Mine into thine thou art merging,
 Ruthlessly mine to arrest!
 Then, as the flame burneth low,
 Sleep with encircling arm
 Shieldeth her child from all harm,
 Softly protecteth the glow.

thetical factors of life, the ego and the universe, in one vision. Much in the manner of Ludwig, Hebbel devoted himself to a study of models that seemed to offer a solution of the problem. Hoffmann, Kleist, Jean Paul were alternately imitated, and a fusion of the characteristic features of their writings was finally attempted in the short story, *Matteo* (1839). To no avail. For a time Hebbel came under the influence of Gutzkow, and though he soon perceived the journalistic character of the literary movement with which Gutzkow was identified, and raised his voice against polemic literature as a prostitution of poetry, yet a new direction was given to his effort. The world of human life came within his vision. Instead of two realities, existence now contained three: Hebbel, Humanity, and Nature as the manifestation of an awful presence. He gradually began to see the same contrast between the second and the third realities that had formerly existed for him only between the first and the third. Humanity thus assumed the place of Hebbel. The tortures of his own life he transferred into humanity.

And now the dramatic activity of Hebbel began. The history of the human race seemed like the record of an eternal struggle between human self-assertion and a dominant consciousness forcing itself upon the race and endeavoring to express itself through human volition and action. The dramas *Judith* and *Genoveva* were, therefore, so subjective in their conception, so titanic in their representation of heroic character, and so fatalistic in their philosophy. But through these fearful pictures of the doom of individual effort there runs an optimistic undercurrent. Hebbel was all the time endeavoring to see in history an equalization of his two realities. Out of this endeavor grew his portentous scheme of a world drama, of which *Judith* and *Genoveva* were to be acts,—a scheme which contemplated a series of dramas analogous to Wagner's cycle, *The Nibelungen Ring*. In these not only the progress of human civilization was to be carried down to the present day, but the final solution of the problem was to be attempted in a *Drama of the Future*.

Hebbel was in a period of his development which may be compared with the first period of Kleist's striving. He was trying to visualize the conflicts of human life in order to see thereby the harmony which he felt they portended. Characteristic of the undercurrent of optimistic endeavor was his occupation with a comic theme. *The Diamond* originated in this period, and from the remarks of Hebbel it appears plainly that he recognized the necessity of greater objectivity, *i.e.* the necessity of dissociating his poetic consciousness in so far from his human consciousness as to be able to see Hebbel, Humanity, and Nature.

In the midst of this poetic struggle the third poem, *To My Soul*, was written. It opened with a beautiful vision of the night, full of unknown bliss:—

Nächtliche Stille!
 Heilige Fülle,
 Wie vom göttlichen Segen schwer,
 Säuselt aus ewiger Ferne daher.
 Was da lebte,
 Was aus engem Kreise
 Auf in's Weit'ste strebte,
 Sanft und leise
 Sank es in sich selbst zurück
 Und quillt auf in unbewusstem Glück.¹

Of the presence of this bliss Hebbel was cognizant. In what it consisted he knew not. The old troubled thought of the absoluteness of individual existence was revived by a reading of Goethe's *Natural Daughter*, and the lines:—

¹ Hush of the night!
 Holy delight,
 Freight heavy with bliss divine,
 Whispers and breathes from eternity's shrine.

Life and being,
 E'er to spaces wide
 From irksome ties a-fleeing,
 Now subside
 Back to self in gentle poise
 And well forth in sweet unconscious joys.

— *An meine Seele*, 1st and 2d stanzas.

Sie ist dahin für alle, sie verschwindet
 Ins Nichts der Asche. Jeder kehret schnell
 Den Blick zum Leben und vergisst im Taumel
 Der treibenden Begierden, dass auch sie
 Im Reiche der Lebendigen schwebt.¹

The all too precocious consciousness of his own humanity forced the poet into the old contrast and once more into reflection, and destroyed the beautiful vision of the night. The last stanza of the poem deteriorated to versified metaphysics. But there is in the first two stanzas of this poem what *Song of the Night* has not, — a consciousness of bliss hidden away in the night.

With a man of such pertinacious purpose, a further step toward the unimpeded outlook into life was a foregone conclusion. Hebbel's idea of a *World-drama* included a dramatization of the great conflicts of modern civilization. On this part of his scheme Hebbel ventured in *Mary Magdalene*, a drama in which the tragic conflict is brought about by the inability of the modern man to adjust his volition to the demands of a higher law which controls the actions of fellow-men. In choosing his characters from burgher life, Hebbel wished to indicate that the great problem of modern civilization was concerned not so much with a readjustment of social forms as with a readjustment of the social vision. He was convinced that the modern man is too prone to look at life from his limited, personal point of view, and that in consequence of this proneness he feels rather than sees, until he is thrust by the bias of his narrow self into a false relation to his surroundings and into that tragic situation where he can only exclaim, "Life confounds me!" Even before the revolution broke over Germany, Hebbel saw the great fault of German life, which was revealed to Ludwig as a result of the

¹ No more we know her now and she has vanished
 To dust and nothingness. To life each one
 Will quickly turn his gaze and soon forget,
 Impelled by lust and passion, that she too
 Still hovers in the realms of living beings.

— *Die natürliche Tochter*, Act III. 1.

revolution and became the central dramatic thought of the latter's *Forester*.

Hebbel was settled in Vienna when the civic storm burst. *Mary Magdalene*, *Julia*, *Tragedy in Sicily*, the three dramas dealing with modern problems, were completed before Ludwig wrote *The Forester*. They were noteworthy for the reason that they disregarded reform measures as ends or even means to an end. "The festering sores on the body politic of modern civilization are not to be cured by covering them with a plaster. They are merely the surface indication of an organic disease and can be healed only by purging the social organism of the germs which breed the disease." With words to that effect, Hebbel justified these dramas. In the liberal (radical) no less than in conservative (reactionary) theories of government, Hebbel could see only the manifestation of an unjustifiable desire to "emancipate the individual" from his proper limitations. Religious and political forms were, after all, for him no more than symbolic expressions of these limitations. Through them men interpret to their reason the feeling of relationship toward the Infinite and toward fellow-men. As time goes on, an interpretation once adequate becomes less convincing, and the moment comes when a readjustment of the symbol to the changed feeling of this relationship is imperative. Modern life seemed to Hebbel to be such a moment. He saw conservative reactionists championing the absolute reality of symbols instead of recognizing their relative value. They appeared to him to rob symbols of their ideal content. Instead of regarding them as expressing a great law of individual dependence, they transformed them into a law of individual independence. Conversely, those who suffered under the rule of this devitalized symbolism were actuated in their attack upon existing symbols merely by a desire to be free, and not also by a desire to find a new phrasing for their changed sense of interdependence. Like Wagner, Hebbel was pessimistic of modern life. He compared it with "a lump of worms feeding greedily on each other," and his dramas of this period he could well liken unto a "death-head" placed by him on the festive board of Belshazzar.

But as in *Julia* and *Genoveva*, so in each of these dramas, there was an undercurrent of optimistic purpose. It sprang from an abiding faith in the divinity of life. This is proved by the statements of Hebbel to the effect that these dramas were intended to rivet attention upon the evils of the day in order that men might see their folly and pursue a more rational course. It is more convincingly proved by his return to the great historic problem of civilization. In *Herod* Hebbel again directed his attention to an epoch of clashing civilizations. Jewish life at the birth of Jesus appeared to him in many of its features comparable to modern life. Out of the conflict of dead symbolism with rabid iconoclasm, and in the very turmoil of selfish assertion, a new symbol of the eternal truth was evolving—the Christian faith as a restatement of the dependence of individual life upon a larger life.

Hebbel could see in the revolution of 1848 only the rule of license. He could not convince himself that the destruction of existing civic forms was equivalent to a regeneration of society. These forms he considered symbolic of relative truths, and he maintained that they should be recognized as such, and reverently changed to express a new relation between man and man. Not revolution, but evolution, was his watchword. First let the people feel the true nature of this new relation, and its proper definition in the symbols of law and order will follow as a matter of course. To destroy symbols in wanton disregard of their deeper meaning is tantamount to subverting the social instinct.

This subtle problem of the relation of the individual to the symbols of civic life expressed in government had for Hebbel's drama *Agnes Bernauer* approximately the same importance as Schiller's theory of human freedom had for *Tell*, with this difference—Schiller's theory was poetically vitalized by Shakespeare's *Cæsar*; Hebbel's reasoning was made poetically available by his immediate experience. The revolution of 1848 charged facts and deductions with perceptible vitality. Hebbel saw his theory exemplified in life. For the writing of *Agnes Bernauer* the revolution was responsible; and since the

revolution exemplified a theory, it was responsible likewise for the polemic character of the drama.

The old story of the love of Albrecht of Bavaria, heir-apparent to the ducal cap, for Agnes, the beautiful daughter of the armorer of Heilbron, served Hebbel merely as the dramatic form for a theory of state which he had drawn largely from the writings of Hegel. Albrecht marries Agnes in defiance of the commands of his father and flees with her to a lonely castle. Here the lovers live in peace and happiness until the old duke ferrets out their hiding-place and has Agnes killed. The logic of the drama does violence to our modern sense of justice, and Hebbel felt this as much as any one. Between the duke, who is not inhuman, but simply subordinates his feelings to questions of state, and his son Albrecht stands Agnes as the innocent victim. Albrecht is willing to resign his claims to the crown, but resignation means disruption of the land among the greedy potentates of neighboring principalities. Nor can he ascend the throne with a lowly wife, because internal dissensions and civic warfare would result. And so, for the sake of his land, the old duke has Agnes murdered, though the deed wrings his heartstrings. Albrecht cannot refute the terrible logic of his father and remains mute as he hears his justification.

Reading the drama one cannot but see that Hebbel's modern feelings refused to accommodate themselves to the interpretation of aristocratic government which his reason sanctioned. The old symbol had evidently lost its convincing power for him. It was dead for the poet, dead, in fact, for the times which he described, dead for all but the old duke. Only worship of the dead form by the princes and nobles of the realms could make the father fear internecine strife as a result of the marriage of his son to Agnes. The deep and touching sympathy with which Hebbel created the two characters Albrecht and Agnes counts for more than the cold logic with which the actions of the duke are justified.

During all these years in which the interests of Hebbel centred upon the problems of contemporary civilization lyrical

poetry was quiescent. It is well worth while to stop a moment and consider what this implied. In the three characteristic poems, *God*, *Song of the Night*, *To My Soul*, his poetic purpose had been to treat the night as the expression of a transcendental idea. In this he had failed. Why? Because there existed for him only two realities—his finite self and infinite nature. His artistic sense demanded a unity in life, a unity between self and nature. There were two ways in which to satisfy this craving. First, by projecting self into nature, as Lenau did; that is to say, by interpreting nature as the embodiment of his moods. So treated his poetry would have created visions of nature as subjective symbols. But before the first of these poems was written, Uhland, so Hebbel tells us, had taught him that the poet should not read his moods into nature; in fact, had taught him that he should read out of nature an objective law, and create visions of nature as objective symbols. This was the alternative, and Hebbel accepted it.

In not one of the poems cited did Hebbel transfer his mood into nature. At most he transferred into the night an idea derived from Goethe. Had nature reflected the moods of Hebbel, the night would have appeared as a chaotic, monstrous annihilator of individual life. But in no instance is this the case. Instinctively Hebbel realized that the night conveyed to men in general a different meaning than it did to him, and following the lead of this instinct he let Goethe's thought interpret in the first poem a phenomenon whose larger meaning he could not read. However, with this adopted significance, Hebbel could not rest content. He must see for himself as Uhland had seen. But see he could not, because he was too conscious of self. The personal factor, his own mood, constantly disrupted his visions. He could only feel. This was the period in which *Song of the Night* was written. After this failure he trained objective sight by endeavoring to see the infinite through humanity. Therefore the poem *To My Soul* produced the fragment of an objective vision of the night, though the subjective treatment of humanity caused the

sombre mood of Hebbel to clash at the critical moment with his vision of the physical aspects of the night.

The years in which Hebbel strove to realize the nature of contemporary problems entirely changed the relation between Hebbel, Humanity, and Nature. Gradually he came to identify himself with humanity. The effort to see contemporary civilization as the manifestation of a social consciousness caused him to treat its forms as great symbols expressive not of his own moods but of an inherent social idea. Thus the teachings of Uhland were applied to a reality which was greater than the individual, yet smaller than the race or race-history, and far more concrete than the vast universe. Step by step the horizon of Hebbel was narrowed and his vision sharpened. Once this identification with human life was effected, the problem of his early struggle was solved. It was no longer : Hebbel and Nature, or Hebbelized Humanity and Nature, but simply Humanity and Nature.

And now he could write *The Benediction of the Night*. He saw the Night with the eyes of mankind, or, if not that, with the eyes of contemporary life. The night became a symbol, not because the poet saw it and reproduced it as an embodiment of his own mood, but because he saw in it the infinite idea whose presence *men* feel. Therefore he could phrase his vision without fear of having it riven into shreds by reflection. Accordingly Hebbel returned to the old vision partly expressed in *To My Soul* and completed it. The first two stanzas he retained with slight euphonic changes, but the place of the last and its reflective brooding was taken by the hallowed vision of the bliss which the night contains : —

Nächtliche Stille!
Heilige Fülle,
Wie von göttlichem Segen schwer,
Säuselt aus ewiger Ferne daher.

Was da lebte,
Was aus engem Kreise
Auf in's Weit'ste strebte,
Sanft und leise

Sank es in sich selbst zurück,
Und quillt auf in unbewusstem Glück.

Und von allen Sternen nieder
Strömt ein wunderbarer Segen,
Dass die müden Kräfte wieder
Sich in neuer Frische regen,
Und aus seinen Finsternissen
Tritt der Herr, so weit er kann,
Und die Fäden, die zerrissen,
Knüpft er alle wieder an.¹

Hebbel's trilogy, *The Nibelungen*, begun (1855) a few years after this poem was written and completed in 1860, challenges comparison with Wagner's cycle, *The Nibelungen Ring*. Both men treated the same legendary-epic material. Their artistic purposes were substantially identical, but their artistic results were far from being alike. Both were symbolists and both held that an artistic symbol phrases in an individual form the unity suggested by a complexity of forms. Earlier in life Hebbel stated the problem somewhat differently. His statement then was: that art must reproduce the infinite in the finite without forfeiting the suggestion of the infinite. Later in life "infinite"

¹ Hush of the night !

Holy delight,
Freighted heavy with bliss divine,
Whispers and breathes from eternity's shrine.

Life and being,
E'er to spaces wide
From irksome ties a-fleeing,
Now subside
Back to self in gentle poise
And well forth in sweet unconscious joys.

Down from all the stars are pouring
Floods of blessing wondrous dight,
Tired energies restoring
To a vigorous delight,
And from darkness ever veiling,
Steps the Lord to nearer view,
All the threads, once torn and trailing,
One by one He knots anew. — *Die Weihe der Nacht*.

and "finite" became relative ideas. Compared with the individual the race or even a social organism is infinite; compared with the universe either is in turn finite. Wagner never saw his own age with the eyes of a poet. Hebbel did. Wagner phrased in musical forms the suggestions which complex life made to his feelings, but he could not phrase them in poetic forms because he did not see as well as feel. And so he approached the Nibelungen myth with the feelings of modern life, but not with its insight. In order to give visual form to these feelings metaphysical speculation had to be invoked. When Hebbel undertook to transform the legend of the Nibelungen into a drama, he had learned to see in contemporary society the operation of a social consciousness. Consequently his attention was not primarily attracted to the metaphysical but to the historical content of the legend. Instead of reverting to the mythological background of the story, he saw its historic foreground. Not the original myth of the Nibelungen, but *The Nibelungen Lied*—i.e. the pagan myth transformed into a new product by Christian civilization, engaged his poetic attention. The old German epic came to him as the visible evidence of the enlarging consciousness of human beings.

Of all modern versions which the beautiful old epic has inspired none can compare with Hebbel's. Whether one is willing to accept the metaphysical problem which he too could not wholly avoid, as an organic element of his poetic symbol, or not,—the great historic conflict of the Christianization of Northern Europe stands forth in the drama as the realization of a new social ideal. A great teleology in human affairs is suggested by the very complexity of the conflict.

It remains a curious fact that the Siegfried of Hebbel's trilogy embodied the same idea as the Siegfried of Wagner's. In the dramas of both poets Siegfried stands as the heroic type of impulsive manhood pure and simple. The full sway of feeling, the complete absence of reflection—is the fundamental law of his being. Wagner would have us believe that this spontaneity of the instincts is the only redemption of life. Hebbel presents it as the great glory of primitive civilization, but as totally in-

consistent with the onmarch of civilization and as in the end undesirable. Siegfried must die, not because he stands for a yet unattained ideal, but because he represents an outlived ideal. For to act spontaneously on the impulses of self, however pure, is as little compatible with the ideal of modern civilization, as to act consciously under the sway of individual volition, however well meant. In neither case is the individual free. He is free only when he acts in the full consciousness of *representative* manhood, so that individual action reflects the mighty impulses of civilization. In this freedom the redemption and glory of the individual must now be sought.

The attempt of Hebbel to vie with Schiller in dramatizing the story of Demetrius, the pretender, fighting for the crown of Russia (1603-1605), was unhappily cut short by death. Requested to complete Schiller's great fragment, he soon found himself forced into a different conception of the story. Instead of completing a fragment, he wrote a new drama. Hebbel represented Demetrius as the victim of deception. Demetrius believes himself entitled to the throne and lays claim to his heritage. The meeting with his supposed mother undeceives him. Shall he resign his purpose, sacrifice his followers, and let the land suffer under the selfish schemes of its grandees — or shall he persist, conscious of his false position, and sacrifice himself for the good of others? Hebbel — at variance with Schiller, who would have Demetrius pursue his schemes out of ambitious motives — represented Demetrius as continuing in his purpose for the sake of others. But the discord in his soul breaks his power of aggressive action and brings about his ruin. The problem of *The Nibelungen* found a new phrasing. Individual volition is strong and victorious only so long as it is the rational phrasing of social impulses.

Before the last act of the drama was completed, death came to Hebbel as a relief from excruciating suffering (1863). The greater part of *Demetrius* was dictated by him who was no longer able to write. Malecosteon of the spine gradually deprived him of all control of his limbs. Yet so clearly had he seen the great, eternal powers vitalizing human action, energiz-

ing individual feeling, willing, and striving, and transfusing all forms of life, animate and inanimate, that in a moment of physical torture, he could pen the grand lines of his poem, *The Brahmin*.

When Hebbel entered upon his struggle for "inner form" or symbolic art, face to face with the great problems of his day, he wrote the lines : —

Es ist die Zeit des stummen Weltgerichts;
In Wasserfluten nicht und nicht in Flammen:
Die Form der Welt bricht in sich selbst zusammen,
Und dämmernd tritt die neue aus dem Nichts.

Der Dichter zeigt im Spiegel des Gedichts,
Wie Tag und Nacht in Morgenrot verschwammen,
Doch wird er nicht beschwören, nicht verdammen,
Der keusche Priester am Altar des Lichts.¹

Thereafter he kept his art free from condemnation and from theoretical reconstructions of society, and strove to see the rosy dawn of morning announcing the day which would dispel the civic and social night of Germany. Therefore, he could be no partisan in the poetry of his last years, but illustrated, as few other German poets have illustrated, the great possibilities of poetry resting on a democratic basis. But because his art was democratic, he escaped also the mystic vagueness of the romanticists and the subjective world sorrow of Lenau. He did succeed in reading a meaning out of life and in representing life, at any rate human life, as an embodiment of an idea transcending its individual forms.

¹ And now hath come the silent judgment-day;
No fires rage, no mighty floods betide:
The world-form totters to its own decay,
A new form rises in the twilight-void.

The poet mirrors in his song the night
Approach of dawn that blendeth day and night,
Yet never will he preach or vilify,
The chaste high-priest of sacerdotal light.

CHAPTER XI

NATIONALISM AND SOCIALISM

THE NATIONAL NOVEL

ALEXIS, SPIELHAGEN, KELLER

WALTER SCOTT and Goethe stood sponsors for the national novel of Germany. Scott supplied a literary form for ideas that had become common property, Goethe suggested the discovery of ideas that might become common property. Scott's *Waverley Novels* were models to be imitated; Goethe's *Elective Affinities* and *William Meister* pointed to a new substance, an original content. Scott summed up; Goethe opened up. Scott was, in a certain sense, the father of the national novel of Germany along historic lines; Goethe put the seal of his authority on the national novel along contemporary, social lines. Thus two perspectives were given: the past in the light of the present, and the present in the light of the future. The one was factitive, the other speculative. Sometimes both perspectives were employed, as by Willibald Alexis in *Keep Cool* (*Ruhe ist die erste Bürgerpflicht*) and in *Isegrimm*; or by Spielhagen in *Problematical Characters*; or more effectively by Keller in *Martin Salander*.

Very soon after the publication of his first novels, Walter Scott was hailed by Germans as the great poetic expounder of national and civic freedom. To them his democracy was a welcome revelation of ideals which promised to solve the problems agitating Germany. Scott depicted national character. His hero was the Scotch people. In his works individual ideals were evolved from collective striving, and individual fate from social conditions. The novels of Scott fitted well to the

temper of German thought. They transformed the idea of aggregation into a concrete poetic fact. Long before Scott wrote *Waverley*, German poets began to subordinate individual character to national or race character.

One of the distinguishing traits of German literature in the first five decades of the nineteenth century was its increasing poetic appreciation of the mass at the expense of the individual. National independence and civic emancipation—the two ideas most prominent in the reform movement of these decades—overshadowed the idea of individual freedom. People were more ready to recognize the dependence of private volition upon collective willing than at any time in the previous century; and poets vied with each other in their efforts to establish the reality of this dependence. Ludwig, Hebbel, and Wagner found their poetic life-work in demonstrating the supremacy of forces transcending individual forms, and in seeking for the law under which these forms fulfil their mission as characteristic emanations of a larger life. These poets stood, however, on the verge of a new movement, which aimed to answer the query: What—as constituent parts of a social reality—is the relation of individual to individual? It will be noted that in this last phase of progressive thought the problem of individual freedom was again prominent. But the idea of individuality was totally different from that prevailing in the eighteenth century. The individual was no longer conceived as an absolute entity whose single, detached fate depended upon the manner in which personal will and personal feeling complemented each other, but was regarded and studied as a unit in a greater entity, as an integral part of society. In the first half of the century the watchword was, the individual *and* society; in the second half it became, the individual *in* society.

To this general tendency in German life the Scotch novelist owed the remarkable popularity which his works enjoyed in Germany. And yet—great as this popularity was—years passed by before German novelists profited by his work. Indeed, they at first attacked and ridiculed his writings. More than a decade elapsed after *Waverley* became known to the Germans before

Immermann and Hauff recognized the greatness of Scott. In 1826 Immermann published a translation of *Ivanhoe*, Hauff the novel, *Lichtenstein*, in which he imitated the historical style of Scott. But neither understood at that time the real significance of the novels of Scott for German poetry. The first to do so was Willibald Alexis. Eighteen years after the publication of *Waverley* he published the first of a series of novels (*Cabanis*, 1832), which applied the ideas of Scott to German life. This was the first attempt to create historical novels in the spirit of Scott. To understand the reason for this hesitation on the part of German poets is equivalent to comprehending the true nature of the influence which Scott exerted.

Scott was not the father of the historical novel in Germany. Nearly ten years before Hauff's *Lichtenstein* appeared, Achim von Arnim wrote his romance of decadent chivalry, *Berthold's First and Second Life* (1817). Scott, however, called attention to a new type of historical novel. Had he merely made a people the hero of his tales, German novelists had been more quick to follow in his footsteps. His novels conceived democracy not only in the spirit of nationalism, but in the spirit of civic equality. Germans recognized almost at once that the national element in the novels of Scott was absolutely controlled by the catholic sympathies of the poet, and that these sympathies were in turn conditioned by the democracy of his environment. The democratic character of his writings was ascribed to that blunt and cordial Scotch nature which, in the past as in the present, drew the mass of the Scotch people into manly fellowship and stood in no reverential awe of the barriers of caste. It was held—and held with truth—that the novels of Scott owed their greatness to his intuitive appreciation of the present and past solidarity of his people. When one reads Immermann's preface to *The Epigoni*, one becomes convinced that the absence of a similar solidarity of the German people made him consider any emulation of Scott futile. For in those days German national character was exceedingly problematical. So far as it was possible to discern some of its leading traits, it seemed to lack that organic relation to history which favored the genius of

Scott. In place of national solidarity, Immermann had to reckon with confused heterogeneity. The consciousness of social unity was distorted by class feeling, the consciousness of race unity was befogged by provincialism and artificial segregation, and the consciousness of historic unity, past and present, was well-nigh inhibited by inability to comprehend the meaning of the present. For these reasons, Immermann tells us, he decided to forego writing a historical novel, and by historical novel he meant the specific type which Scott had created.

The most prominent historical novelists who emulated Scott were Hauff, Alexis, Scheffel, Keller, and Freytag. It is a singular fact that none of these novelists approached from its national side the solution of the problem which Immermann considered impossible for his day. They all seemed to realize that German national consciousness was far too complex to be made the immediate theme of creative literature. Solidarity of mass character and mass history they found in provincial development, and desiring to present this solidarity as a national reality they treated the province as a symbol of the nation. Hauff's Suabia pointed to a greater reality, to the German nation. Alexis's Brandenburg, Scheffel's Baden, Keller's Switzerland, and Freytag's Silesia were in the same way poetic symbols of a national life and a national consciousness which had not yet acquired definite form.

But as the century grew the happy union of local and national patriotism, which made Uhland's poetry of such sterling worth, was recognized more readily as an essential qualification to poetic creation. The provincial symbolism of Hauff was far more naïve than that of his successors. He was not fully alive to the national significance of Suabian life and history. Suabia was his Scotland. Alexis, Scheffel, and Freytag were keenly conscious of the symbolic value of their provincial types. As expressive of his aims in the novel, *Ekkehard* (1855), Scheffel could quote Macaulay's words, "I shall cheerfully bear the reproach of having descended below the dignity of history if I can succeed in placing before the English of the nineteenth century a picture of the life of their ancestors."

Nor was this return to sturdy local pride as the basis of national patriotism confined to historical novels. The merest glance at the literary productions of the fifties and sixties reveals the fact that the best writers, with the possible exception of Hebbel, realized the great problems of their day in the spirit of their respective localities. Ludwig spoke for Thuringia, Fritz Reuter for Mecklenburg, William Raabe for Brunswick, Claus Groth for Holstein, Theodor Storm for Sleswick, and Spielhagen for Pomerania.

There was, however, a most characteristic difference between the story of provincial life as a symbol of national history and the story of provincial life as a symbol of present national unrest and its possible future. The first recognized a precise and very definite character of locality, prided itself in this character, and, tracing its historic growth in the face of obstacles not unlike those besetting the nation at large, saw in this character and its development a typical form of national life. The second recognized no such distinct character in provincial history. In fact, it did not consider history, but merely existing provincial forms. It used these forms as definite types wherein to condense the experiences of national life at large. The process was therefore reversed. Willibald Alexis represents the national novel of the first kind in its best development; Friedrich Spielhagen developed the second in its most characteristic features.

Willibald Alexis, under which name William Häring (1797-1871) was known to the literary world, and Friedrich Spielhagen (1829-) began their literary careers in different periods of German national development. Both were strongly influenced by reactionary conditions, but in the case of Alexis these were prerevolutionary; in the case of Spielhagen post-revolutionary. The temperament of the latter was more artistic than that of the former. Alexis was more matter-of-fact and by far less sensitive. But this difference in temperament does not quite account for the difference in their novels. Alexis summed up, Spielhagen sought to open up, and the

difference in their literary work is substantially the difference between Scott and Goethe. Since the novels of both writers were national in their scope, the difference must be accounted for by conditions of national life as much as by personal temperament.

Cabanis was not the first novel written by Alexis under the influence of Scott. Nine years previous to its publication he created a mild sensation in literary circles by imitating in *Walladmor* (1823) the mannerisms of Scott, and successfully palming this novel off on his countrymen as one of Scott's. At that time Alexis little understood the spirit of the author whom he imitated. He copied the technique of Scott to perfection, but of the two leading characteristics of his novels he had small comprehension. That in order to be a German Scott he must depict German life, as a historic and democratic solidarity, seems not to have occurred to him.

This insight he gained during the following years of political reaction. Häring (Alexis) had participated in the enthusiastic uprising against Napoleon, and had been fired by the thought of a new German empire. We have only to recall the sentimental nature of this enthusiasm to appreciate the great obstacle in the way of a national historical novel. The thought of German unity through Prussia, though suggested by Werner, dramatically prophesied by Kleist, and tentatively broached by Arndt, was as yet largely a poet's dream and not sufficiently popular to supply a perspective for the novelist. But under the régime of Metternich Germans came to look toward Prussia as the great hope of Germany, and when the fourth decade opened, the demands of men like K. Gutzkow, Paul Pfizer, William Schulz, and Ernst Münch for a union of German states under Prussian leadership, expressed an idea which had taken deep root in all non-Austrian states. Thus Prussia might well stand for Germany, and the story of Prussian growth become typical of German history.

People had also begun to understand by this time that the great struggle for national independence had also been a struggle for civic freedom. Alexis so regarded it and was accounted

a radical in his political views. Even Heine could speak of him as a champion of human liberties. He was more or less identified with the Young German movement for constitutional reforms, and for a time (1830-1835) edited the *Freimütige*, a Berlin journal of decidedly liberal tendencies. Through this identification with the great civic movement of the third and fourth decades Alexis was enabled to perceive in German life a strong current of democratic thought. Government, as a democratic institution, was the new ideal which he perceived evolving out of German character. The necessary perspective for an historical novel after the manner of Scott was thereby obtained — solidarity of race through Brandenburg-Prussia, and a definite, precise character of the present social order as the result of historic evolution.

Now, and not till now, was Alexis able to write in the spirit of Scott. The time had come to sum up. When Kleist wrote *The Prince of Homburg*, it was a question whether Germany would accept the Brandenburg-Prussian principle of state as its national ideal. The conflict was on between the democratic principle which made the state identical with the common weal, and the despotic principle which, identifying state and government, subordinated the common weal to political ends and the state to individual caprice. The situation was dramatic and demanded dramatic treatment. No sooner had this conflict been decided in the popular mind than the situation became epic. To be sure, the principle had not become practice, but it was largely accepted by Germans as their national ideal, and as such was no longer capable of genuine dramatic presentation. Recognizing the principle exalted by Kleist in *The Prince of Homburg* as the determining force in contemporary national life, Alexis was moved to shed the glamour of poetry over its achievements in the past.

In *Cabanis*, as the first venture of this kind, the novelist very naturally turned to that period of Brandenburg-Prussian history which demonstrated most clearly the democratic basis of Brandenburg-Prussian government. The memory of Frederick the Great was a household treasure, and his oft-quoted

words, "I am the first servant of the state," were regarded as defining the aim and purpose of government. Well as Alexis reproduced local color and atmosphere, it can hardly be said that he achieved greatness in this novel. He was too deep in the problems of the present to confine himself to that one problem which seemed settled. The source of government, no less than its aim, was now engaging the attention of the people. Manifestly with this problem Frederick and his times were not concerned; yet Alexis could not eliminate it from his story. Therefore his characterization of Frederick the Great strikes the reader more as a product of the reflective powers than as a creation of the imaginative faculties. His hero, Etienne, has too much of the young German moodiness, his count Cabanis too little of the saving grace of humor, his female characters have too much of modern disingenuousness to fit well with the sturdy honesty and bluff frankness of their surroundings.

For the next few years Alexis kept in touch with the progressive spirit of his day. *The Family Dusterweg* (1835), and *Twelve Nights* (1838), were novels dealing with contemporary life after the fashion of Gutzkow's *Wally* and Laube's *Young Europe*. Thereafter Alexis refused to follow the course taken by the Young Germans. He turned his back on their revolutionary tendencies, not only where these were political, but also where they undermined, through cynical attacks and sceptical negation, the established forms of faith and social intercourse. In his whole attitude toward the new problems disturbing society he became a moderate liberal. He took his stand on the other side of the line which separated the civic problem into an old and a new, preferring to hold fast to ideals which he understood rather than press on to ideals which were beyond his sight. The soldier of 1813-1815 knew now what he had fought for, and this certain knowledge he would not exchange for the vexed question which new social ideas threatened to make of civic ideals. Heine was not unjustified in launching his sarcastic wit at his former associate, and though one cannot but admit that Alexis the novelist gained in power,

one must regret that this power was gained at a sacrifice to his progressive manhood.

As motto for *Woldemar the Pretender* (1842), Alexis chose a paragraph from the third book of the novel : —

“Because I tell you Brandenburg stories, some of you may exclaim, Why should you bother about the German eagle? Let it fly, you say, and stick to your country! But I cannot. For Brandenburg, methinks, was but a member of the great German body, and so God wills, shall ever so remain. What disrupts Germany, disrupts it. I tell you Brandenburg stories of olden times; but, methinks, they are German stories. For the trials of Brandenburg were the trials of the German empire, rent its heart, and sucked at its life-blood. In those days disloyalty and deception began, and the cunning art of double-tongued speech and honeyed words glossing over a bad business that the countries might be hoodwinked. And the deeds of the great reacted upon the small.”

This motto is characteristic of the entire series of the author's Brandenburg-Prussian novels written after *Cabanis*. It points at once to their faults and their merits.

In a way, the ideal which Alexis accepted as touchstone of the past was arbitrary — arbitrary at least in its incompleteness. He excluded elements of ferment which could not be excluded since they were actual facts. His unprogressive attitude left the ideal of national life incomplete and deprived it of its full measure of objectivity. To the extent of this limitation it was subjective. This subjectivity did not permit his stories of Brandenburg to speak for themselves. Their perspective was not quite true to the present. Alexis suspected as much. He feared their symbolic value would not be understood in his day. Constantly, therefore, he succumbed to the temptation which prompted him to label his symbols, and such reflections, as the one quoted from *Woldemar*, are by no means uncommon in his works. The simple, epic quality in Scott's tales was never acquired by Alexis.

On the other hand, such as it was, his perspective was definite and remained the same for the whole series from *Roland of Berlin* (1840) down to *Dorothy* (1856). His theme thereby

acquired a certain plastic reality. In every novel Brandenburg landscape and Brandenburg folk have a distinct, mutually interdependent character. Both develop, as it were, hand in hand. This character appears as the gradual realization of an idea, which idea is, of course, the liberal idea of a constitutional monarchy paired with a representative government. Alexis conceived his men and women as typical representatives of their land and folk, as the individual precipitates of their times, as the positive and negative products of the aforesaid idea transforming temporal values into new realities. According to the chronology of this idea, his novels of Brandenburg-Prussia arrange themselves in the following series:—

Woldemar the Pretender (1842), *Roland of Berlin* (1840), *The Breeches of my Lord Bredow* (1846), continued in *The Werwolf* (1848), *Dorothy* (1856), *Keep Cool* (1852), and *Isegrimm* (1854). The series covers approximately the whole political-economic development of Brandenburg from ridiculous insignificance to a commanding position in German affairs. It traces the development of its government from the time when government meant the rule of brute force dictated by individual necessity to the time when government rested on the principle of state which it was the purpose of the novelist to glorify.

The mystification in *Woldemar* is complete. One is never quite sure, not even after the last chapter has been reached, that this Woldemar is not the true Woldemar, though he is proclaimed a pretender and seems finally to concede as much himself. Alexis was depicting the earliest history of Brandenburg and concerned with a portrayal of the indigenous nature of its principle of state. It was necessary for him to show that it was bred in the blood of these sturdy yeomen by the laws of their existence. We are told that in his younger days Margrave Woldemar ruled with an iron hand, but with an eye single to the welfare of his people. He fell in battle, but the common people refuse to believe him dead. They look for his return and cherish his memory. Years pass by; the province is despoiled by selfish princes of the blood. Bavaria is about to make it tributary to its rule. Woldemar, aged but dauntless, appears

on the scene, saves his country, and establishes a paternal government. The princes of the blood refuse to credit his claims and spread the rumor that he is a pretender. It is asserted that the present Woldemar was once nothing more than the body servant of the true Woldemar, and that, through these personal relations, he became familiar with all the doings of his master, cognizant of the manner of his death, and therefore able to play the rôle of pretender to perfection. In spite of this accusation, the people remain loyal to the resurrected Woldemar and cling to him as the incarnation of their ideal. In this manner Alexis made it appear that even in the earliest days of autocratic rule popular instinct coupled the right to rule with a duty to the people, and that it preferred a technically illegitimate rule which recognized this duty, to a reign punctilious in its claim to legitimacy but unscrupulous in its disregard of its duty to the people. And this thought, around which the novel is spun with fine appreciation of human frailty, finds a legitimate climax in the solemn oath of the pretender that he is the true Woldemar. It is no false oath nor a quibbling with words. So completely imbued is he with the spirit of the dead, that the dead has come to life in him, and so supremely paramount is the spirit which guides action to the human tool which performs its behests, that he *is* Woldemar, though once he was not.

In *Roland of Berlin* the scene has shifted. A few centuries have passed. The time has come when the relations between city and country demand readjustment. It is no longer possible for the great centres of the land to claim independent existence. The burghers must recognize their allegiance to the whole country and act as members of a greater unit. Sturdy independence and cheerful self-reliance must pair themselves with a sturdy sense of duty to the needs of the realm and with cheerful willingness to coöperate. The blunt burgomaster of Berlin insists that the sovereign independence of his city is a formal right sanctioned and hallowed by custom. Sooner, he avers, will the statue of Roland leave its pedestal on the marketplace and pass through the streets, than a title of this law be

changed. But the statue descends from its pedestal, at the behest of the elector, and is carried through the streets. Principle prevails over formal laws and custom.

Again in *The Breeches of my Lord Bredow* and its continuation, *Werwolf*, a great principle of state clashes with another custom that once conformed to sturdy, self-reliant Brandenburg character, but has outlived its usefulness and become vicious. The nobility of the land, once natural protectors of its peasantry, now vultures preying on its commerce and industry, are taught the wholesome lesson that they, too, are subject to a higher law and owe allegiance to the realm as the common weal. Delightfully humorous is the incident which saves Knight Götz from participation in the conspiracy of the nobility against the elector. He has but one pair of breeches, and these he will not have cleansed. They are his symbol of the good old days when simplicity reigned and the barons were feudal lords ever ready to vault into the saddle in defence of life and liberty. Time has outstripped my lord, and in turn he kills time by drink. One autumn, at the approach of the great annual washing, the baron is in his cups again. His spouse carries off his beloved garment to be washed. As a result of this action my Lord Bredow finds it impossible to attend the meeting of his dissatisfied fellows and escapes their fate, though he dies of the rash effort to reason out for himself the new order of things.

Dorothy, Alexis's last and weakest novel, weakest because time had in turn too far outstripped the writer, brought his story down to the reign of the Great Elector, the period treated by Kleist in *The Prince of Homburg*. The novel is the proem to *Cabanis*, in which paternal government reaches its highest development.

The last two novels of the series, *Keep Cool* and *Isegrim*, are commonly considered Alexis's best, though they are more diffuse than any of their predecessors. They brought out very distinctly the democratic nature of the whole series. The title of the first was suggested by the notorious words of Count Schulenburg-Kehnert, *Ruhe ist die erste Bürgerpflicht*. These words were placarded throughout the streets of Berlin after

the disastrous battle of Jena, when Napoleon threatened German liberties. In choosing them for the title of his novel Alexis indicated that the time had come when the people and not the rulers represented Brandenburg-Prussian ideals. He wrote his novel nearly half a century after they were uttered. But the ideal which stirred German hearts in the early days of the century and the promise which the people had wrung from unwilling rulers had not become facts. Democracy in the form of benevolent despotism had served its purpose; democracy in the form of constitutional monarchy and representative government had not yet supplanted it. In *Keep Cool* and *Isegrimm* Alexis told the story of the change in public sentiment, but he also told the story of its failure to materialize in a change of government. Intellectual vagaries and moral depravity of the higher social classes, mental sloth and the lack of energy in the masses, general egotism and indifference among all classes — these were the great obstacles which barred the way to the practical achievement of popular ideals. The lesson which Alexis desired his readers to take to heart, was this: Qualify for active citizenship and for civic initiative. Sentiment is not enough; theorizing is not enough! What is needed is the ability to *act*! In *Isegrimm* this lesson was most emphatically driven home. Like Schiller's Attinghausen in *William Tell*, Alexis's nobleman is forced to admit that the days of paternal feudalism have gone by and that the people must henceforth work out their own salvation. The sturdy, honest, educated burgher takes up the task of civic self-rule, and the heritage of his forefathers is intrusted to him as a precious duty and a glorious privilege.

So much in brief of a series which realized, as far as it was possible to realize, the ideal of a national historical novel. In the last two works of the series, *Keep Cool* and *Isegrimm*, Alexis was trespassing on the domain of the contemporary social novel. But his attempt to deal with the future was futile. The author was measuring German life by an arbitrary rule. His national civic ideal had been left behind by progressive changes in social life. His vision was clouded. Though written in the

same perspective as the other novels of the series, these two have not their characteristic directness. *Keep Cool* is weighted down with details which, to be sure, are subordinated to the central plot, but scarcely subordinated artistically. The coloring of these two pictures of contemporary German life is without perspective, and the social environment of the leading characters does not comport with the serial idea both novels are supposed to sustain.

Friedrich Spielhagen entered the field of literature at a time when the social problem could no longer be separated from the civic. Freiligrath had proclaimed that the state as an idea was not large enough to include the ideals of modern life. To base good citizenship on nothing but duty to the community, which was the theory of pre-revolutionary writers, could not lead to the desired results. One of the great merits of his poetry, reckless as it often was in its appeal to human passions, was the clear enunciation of the principle that civic virtue rests ultimately on an enlightened appreciation of the social bond between man and man. Your state, he exclaimed in effect, is an idea, an abstraction. Your reverence for that idea is praiseworthy. But you cannot expect men to embody in their living the tenets of your ideal state unless you change conditions of daily life which discredit its reality. You have got to arrive at a proper and just conception of the duty of man to man before you can hope to realize your theory of his relation to the state. You have got to reform social intercourse before you can establish your ideal of civic responsibility and privilege. True civic activity develops only out of true social activity. That was the burden of Freiligrath's song. We find the same thought inspiring the poetry of Ludwig, Wagner, and Hebbel. Spielhagen made it his theme.

When Spielhagen first came into prominence as a writer, the civic ideal of Alexis was making for government reforms throughout Germany. Constitutional and representative government was being conceded, or at least on the verge of being conceded, in every state of the realm. And yet the country

seemed as much distracted as ever. Industrial development was emphasizing more and more with each year the instability of existing conditions. Essentially democratic as had been the reasoning which finally modified autocratic rule by constitutional limitations and legislative assemblies, it was after all supported by aristocratic and not by democratic sentiment. At no time in the nineteenth century was it ever possible to say that German leaders wholly discarded the thought of government control. Always—in the last decades, perhaps even more so than in the first—the idea of state resolved itself into the idea of government. People looked to a constituted authority for guidance and for remedial measures, rather than to the community as the body politic. And this willingness to be led rather than to do the leading made possible the ascendancy of a man whose influence, say what one may of his political victories, rested and still rests banefully on German society.

Amid the fulsome praises that have been sounded of Bismarck one may well hesitate to speak of him as the incarnation of the evil principle which retarded the progress of Germany toward democratic freedom. One hesitates the more since his detractors in Germany, those who most criticised his “iron-rule,” were often as undemocratic as he. With that keen insight into national character which made a logical unit of his life-work, Bismarck recognized in German social democracy only another phase of government control and a characteristically German interpretation of aristocratic rule. In adopting tenets of the socialistic dogma, he did not change, but merely amplified, his system of paternal government. Out of an indefinite and undefined theory he derived a definite and well-defined practice. But, logically as his whole system evolved from the ideals of national independence, national unity, and civic compactness, and logically as it made use of the aristocratic bias of the Germans, it was by no means an organic creation. Under the influence of a fixed theory of state, the new impulse toward social brotherhood sought official recognition in the state. It gave birth to a *theory* of society and fatuously de-

manded that this theory be sanctioned and put into practice by governments. Socialism, in its origin the expression of democratic principles, stultified itself by employing the methods of aristocracy. More than any one else Bismarck was to blame for the perversion of the best instincts of the German people. The great truth sounded by the poets of revolution remained unimpeached. Nay, these developments made it stand forth the more clearly from its original extravagant setting.

Look at the last half of the nineteenth century as we may, either as firm believers in democracy or as supporters of aristocracy, we see Germany entering upon a new conflict. Should the democratic principle prevail in social life, or should the reorganization of society proceed under government control? Should the future structure of society rest upon a reformed consciousness of its members, or should a reformed structure endeavor to force a new social consciousness?

It will be seen that the poet who attempted to present the story of contemporary life faced a situation that was essentially dramatic. It could not be epic, because in the nature of things no perspective was given him for his tale. As the conflict of the day progressed, the situation shifted and things were seen from a new angle. To see this conflict dramatically was however a portentous task. It was equivalent to having a vision of the present from the vantage of the future, whence the confused lines of contemporary life would appear converging to the same point. Spielhagen never had this vision. True artist that he was, he recognized how essential it was for his poetry. His whole life was a ceaseless, ineffectual struggle to see dramatically. He knew this and freely admitted it in his autobiographical novel, *Perceiver and Conceiver* (Finder und Erfinder, 1889). It was hardly necessary for him to enlighten the student on this point. Any careful study of his writings leads to the same conclusion. In his novels he really was trying to perceive the characteristic contrasts of contemporary life that he might be enabled to conceive their potential solution. His great ambition was to write the drama of modern life; his great disappointment was his inability to do so because

the one thing lacking—dramatic prospective—was never acquired.

If one is to judge Spielhagen's novels by absolute canons of genre, one must soon break the staff over them. Epics they are not, and, of course, they are neither dramas nor lyrics. The classic doctrinaire finds no place for them in poetic literature. Yet even the doctrinaire has an uncomfortable feeling that they belong somewhere within the field which he has divided into his three categorical tracts. So he calls them dramatic epics, or, in so far as he regards the novel as a subgenre of the epic, dramatic novels. The unbiassed critic prefers to regard them as characteristic manifestations of German life in an open field of literary possibilities.

Spielhagen's novels and short stories are too numerous to find detailed mention in these pages. His novels were not strictly "contemporary," that is to say, when he wrote he was not dealing with conditions of the immediate present. He frankly admitted his inability to do so without becoming a mere copyist instead of a composer. In order to gain a perspective, he allowed a few years to intervene between the moment of composition and the events described. Still, one is justified in speaking of Spielhagen's novels as contemporary fiction. For he confined himself largely to events and problems that fell within his own observation, and that he considered characteristic of the second half of the century as the period in which he lived. Through his novels he endeavored to give a moving picture of this period.

In so far as his novels constitute a series, they deserve a more detailed discussion. However, this series was tentative. It had no common perspective like the series written by Alexis. Each novel had its own. It is as if the novelist halted now and then for a moment, and, looking back over the road he and his country have travelled together, endeavored in each novel to sum up the most striking features of their common experience. Then he continues his journey to stop further on and again recount what has befallen. Eight of Spielhagen's novels may be arranged in such a series: *Problematical Char-*

acters, *The Family Hohenstein*, *In Rank and File*, *Hammer and Anvil*, *To the Front*, *Flood-tide and Storm*, *What Shall the Harvest Be?*, *A Modern Pharaoh*.

Problematical Characters (1860), a complement to Immermann's *Epigoni*. Time: the years immediately preceding the revolution of 1848. Theme: the baneful influence exerted upon individual character by social and political conditions, the ideal possibilities of which are incomprehensible.

"A breath of freedom in our fatherland—yes, that would ease all, all our hearts!" These words of Oswald, one of the leading characters, indicate the problem with which Spielhagen was dealing. The longing for something, they know not what, fills the breast of these people. It is akin to the vague longing of the romanticists. "They are stricken unto death by the longing for the blue flower, and some day they will die of this unsatisfied longing," is Oldenburg's characterization of his generation.

The Family Hohenstein (1863). Time: the revolution of 1848–1849. Theme: birth of a new social ideal.

As motto for this novel Spielhagen chose the words of Hamlet, "The times are out of joint." The altruistic dreams of Magister Schmalhans form the basis of a new, social ideal. We hear him telling us: "There is no God whom you could offend, but there is a humanity which you offend, which you disgrace, against which you sin! . . . Have you forgotten that it was the Son of Man who so loved his brothers that he died for them on the cross? Hold fast to the thought that it was a human being who thus acted and thus loved, and that you are human beings like as he was, and can act and love as he acted and loved, provided you give up your God in heaven and eternal salvation and listen to the God in your bosom and seek your salvation here on earth." And when Spielhagen put into the mouth of this gentle idealist the words, "Educate yourself, my German people, for freedom and love!"—he phrased the fulness of his own democracy. The hope of the nation lies, however, in the active sympathy of its youth for such ideals and not in the preaching thereof. Not Balthazar

Schmalhans is Spielhagen's ideal, but the open-hearted, energetic youth, willing to do and to dare, and guided in all his doings by this principle of love. In rather effective manner the novelist represented the passing of pre-revolutionary conditions. Münzer, the agitator and socialist, is a leftover of the days described in *Problematical Characters*, a romanticist driven to action by the problematical nature of his being. He is a demagogue, not a democrat. And his union with Antonie von Hohenstein, the fair representative of outlived nobility, presages the coming end of an old régime. The seeming chaos is but the first manifestation of a new and more vigorous life.

In Rank and File (1866). Time: about 1860. Theme: the conflict between social democracy and true democracy.

That Spielhagen had no sympathy for social democracy one realizes very quickly from his portrait-study in this novel of Ferdinand Lassalle, the originator of social democracy in Germany. In the main the novel presents a character study of two cousins, Leo Gutmann (Lassalle) and Walther Gutmann, and it must be admitted that Spielhagen has successfully described the divergent influence of the same set of conditions upon different temperaments. One is, however, not quite sure whether Walther Gutmann represents Spielhagen's ideal of democratic activity. Or, to state the same criticism in other words, one is not quite sure what Walther Gutmann's ideal of democracy is. His words, which serve to explain the title of the book, do not state much more than a general idea: "The heroic age has passed away. . . . The battle-cry is not, one for all, but all for all. . . . The individual is merely a soldier in rank and file." That the critics of Spielhagen were enabled to reply to the argument of his novel, "But the rank and file demand leadership," proves the indefiniteness of the novelist's idea. He did not consider, as his critics have not considered, that there is a difference in leadership, and that aristocratic leadership is by no means identical with democratic leadership. This much, however, is clear: that Spielhagen had no faith in the redemption of society through government agencies, no faith in the elevation of labor through artificially fostered "pro-

luctive associations," no faith in unrestricted suffrage, and little faith in Lassalle's repudiation of the theory of supply and demand as determining wage. The severest criticism to be passed on the novel is that it is too academic. The characters are sharply drawn, but the influences that sway the masses do not appear clearly. Leo Gutmann (Lassalle) is too much of an individual product instead of a typical product of his times. The novel is noteworthy for its rather vivid discussion of the various theories of social life which men like Lassalle, Franz Ziegler, and Lothar Bucher advanced to meet the needs of changed conditions.

Hammer and Anvil (1869). Time: immediately following the previous novel. Theme: coöperation.

Spielhagen wrote this novel in conscious opposition to what he conceived to be Goethe's individualistic views of life. He had in mind Goethe's stanza, *Good Advice*, which closed with the lines: —

Du musst steigen oder sinken,
Du musst herrschen und gewinnen
Oder dienen und verlieren,
Leiden oder triumphieren,
Amboss oder Hammer sein.¹

The novel is a ringing protest against this doctrine. The modern man has no such choice. The ethics of life demand that he recognize only one; to be hammer *and* anvil. Again we meet with the gentle idealist whose dreams become the inspiration of youthful energies. Balthazar Schmalhans of *The Family Hohenstein* has in *Hammer and Anvil* his double in von Zehren, superintendent of the penitentiary. "Everywhere," says he, "the thoroughly barbaric relation of master and slave, of dominant and suppressed castes, is hardly veiled; everywhere there seems to be only the troubled choice whether to be hammer or anvil. What we are taught, what we experience,

¹ Thou must rise or must descend,
Be a master and succeed,
Or a servant and decline,
Thou must triumph or resign,
Hammer or the anvil be. — *Guter Rat*.

what we see all about us,—it would all seem to prove that there is no third choice. And yet a more profound misconception of the true relation of men is hardly conceivable; and yet there not only exists a third choice, but this third choice is absolutely the only one. . . . Not hammer *or* anvil; hammer *and* anvil should be our motto, for every thing and every being is at every moment at the same time—both. With the same energy wherewith the hammer strikes the anvil, the anvil strikes the hammer.” George Hartwig exemplifies this idea in practice. In the first part of the novel he appears as “anvil,” but instead of choosing the false alternative of becoming a “hammer,” he is lead, through his prison experience and intercourse with von Zehren, to the large view of the brotherhood of man. Sturdily he works his way through life, the founder of a factory based on profit sharing and copartnership of the workmen.

To the Front (1872). Time: immediately preceding the Franco-German War of 1870. Theme: the insufficiency of the national ideal of 1813 for modern Germany.

The novel is perhaps one of Spielhagen’s weakest. One is half induced to believe that the war about to break out has very little to do with popular ideals. There is no general enthusiasm for the principle which the war is presumed to establish. Rather, the conflict seems to be welcomed as a relief from further pothering with vexed questions at home and appears very much in the light of a political game destined, if not intended, to distract attention from the critical issues of the day. Not the theme, but the uncertainty in which Spielhagen leaves the reader is to be criticised. Spielhagen merely hints at the insufficiency of the ideal which was so loudly proclaimed to the people as the substance of their longing.

Flood-tide and Storm (1876). Time: the years of speculation following the Franco-German War of 1870. Theme: the folly of disregarding great social issues.

Days of wild orgy and sordid ambition are at hand. The war has dulled the consciences. For the moment, all the earnest striving of previous years is forgotten. The millions of the French war indemnity dazzle the eyes of the people. Society is

robbed of its ideal and is transformed into a mass of individual atoms, battenning on each other in the fierce lust of gain and pleasure. The so-called *Gründerzeit* has come when gold is the idol of the crowd and virtue hides her face in shame. Forgotten is the law of the universe, — love. Nature herself is outraged. With magnificent symbolism, the flood-tides that the great storm of 1874 hurled upon the lowlands along the Baltic portend the doom of a society unamenable to social instincts. Spielhagen is here at his best. Nature which he knew so well and pictured so vividly in his shorter stories (*e.g. Among the Dunes*, 1858) comes here to her rights again. But Spielhagen was no pessimist. There are sterling characters in this sombre setting, men and women who realize the truer values of life and stand as types of the better impulses of the people, which bide their time. Beneath the frothing surface are the calm, deep waters of national worth. The leading figure in the novel, Reinhold Schmidt, exemplifies what Herwegh meant when he wrote the lines : —

The sea will wash and cleanse our hearts
From rust-stains left by tyranny.

It is Reinhold who has overcome the bias of class. For democracy, too, or that which claims to be democracy, has developed a pride of its own. And Spielhagen leaves little to choose between the old aristocratic sense of honor which guides General von Werben, and the prejudice of the middle classes which rules the manufacturer, Mr. Ernst. Reinhold Schmidt, sturdy sea captain that he is, has no prejudices of class, and between General von Werben, his future father-in-law, and Mr. Ernst, his wealthy uncle, he constitutes the bond of a final union.

What Shall the Harvest Be? (Was soll das werden? 1886). Time: about 1880. Theme: the ascendancy of Bismarck.

Again we meet with the problem of social democracy, now enlarged by such men as Karl Marx. The shadow of the "Iron Chancellor" rests upon the land. Good men and true find their endeavors blocked; others, anxious for reforms, flock openly and secretly to the banners of socialism and nihilism. Shall the great ideal of modern Germany emerge victorious from this era of

party? Spielhagen answers the query with undaunted optimism. Methods for the moment seem to have the upper hand of principle. But the time will come when people will realize that panaceas of reform are more or less imperfect embodiments of ideals. The -isms of the age express the great longing for reformation and the impatience of men for a "new, glorious phase of ever striving humanity." Meanwhile the distractions of party rule only tend to make men more conscious of the nature of their striving.

A Modern Pharaoh (1889). Time: approximately as in the previous novel. Theme: idealism paralyzed by Bismarck.

The country seems to consist of two classes — men striving for power and men content to be slaves. Germans have proved the truth of Goethe's saying, as interpreted by Spielhagen: —

Be a master and succeed,
Or a servant and decline.

Bismarck has held up a false ideal to German society. His iron rule has killed ambition in most Germans. Their manhood has fled. Too long they have been held in tutelage and have grown accustomed to look for the bestowal of benefits. Noble self-assertion has been borne to the ground by the heavy hand of bureaucratic rule. In others the lust for power has been stimulated by the example of Bismarck. *Strebertum* is rampant. In the person of Alden, an old forty-eightier, back on a visit from America, the home of his adoption, Spielhagen contrasts the idealism of the revolutionary period with the materialism of these later days. The novelist's optimism has changed to pessimism.

One peculiarity cannot fail to impress the reader of the novels of this series — paucity of situation and of characteristic types. However much the elements change that go to make a situation, somehow Spielhagen always combines them in very much the same manner. His plot may change, but one is constantly troubled with the thought as one reads through his works: I have read something like this before. The same impression haunts one in respect to his characters. Again and again the same types reappear until the reader becomes weary

of Spielhagen's men and women. This obvious paucity was due more to the lack of a true poetic perspective than to anything else. Spielhagen could delineate character and create real men and women ; but he was too much swayed by a fixed idea to study calmly the various forms in which the ideals of human life express themselves. Scott was his earliest model, and Scott was a poor model for a young German writer to choose in the second half of the last century. Spielhagen was determined to set forth a unitary development of contemporary Germany, and since the nature of its next goal was unseen, he studied contemporary life with the eyes of a subjective idealist. Though he saw new ideas and different forces coming to the surface, he could see them mostly only in forms that were cognate to his subjective bias. Had he recognized with poetic insight the meaning of the great unrest, and in the calm assurance of the truth he saw studied the present in relation to this truth, the multiform manifestations of social ethics in individual character and their relative embodiment in social character would have been more nearly realized in his novels.

Whether Spielhagen set himself a task which must always lie beyond the bounds of the possible may be a matter of speculation. Certain it is that no novelist of Spielhagen's time, born, bred, and living in Germany, surpassed, or even equalled, his attainments as a national novelist. Gustav Freytag won no little fame by his series, *The Ancestors*. But these novels had regard for only one phase of German national development. Political unity of the German people was an ideal which Germans could now appreciate without the aid of a poet's imagination. The great problem stirring German hearts, and the one which called for the constructive imagination of the poet, was social unity. Freytag's series touched only the surface of national life ; Spielhagen's sought the bed-rock of its social structure. To be sure, Freytag's *Debit and Credit* (Soll und Haben), and numerous other novels of the whole century, from Goethe's *William Meister* down to the present day, ventured upon the field which Spielhagen explored in its length and breadth and depth. But these novels, with all their

undeniable merits, are without the grand significance which one must ever couple with the name of Spielhagen.

Spielhagen was at his best as a writer of fiction when he avoided experimenting with the national significance of provincial types, and confined himself to telling the simple story they suggested. Here the variety of characteristic expression found a keener delineator. The author was more in touch with the spirit that pervades the Baltic lowlands. Spielhagen's stories of German life, as he saw it reflected in the mirror of locality, were more spontaneous and far less academic. More limited his horizon was, but for that reason the speculative problems that troubled his poetic vision in his large series were excluded. *Among the Dunes, Lowlands* (1879), *Rosie* (Röschen vom Hofe), are superior in artistic conception and literary finish to any of his more pretentious works. And yet one cannot help admiring the sterling ambition of Spielhagen, which prompted him to write the epic of national life, nor can one help sympathizing with the noble idealism of the writer which—though it often made paragons of his heroes—also made life richer and grander, and imparted to it a divine solemnity too often disregarded in the rush of modern society.

With mingled feeling of hope and uncertainty Spielhagen appropriately closed his literary career by writing *The Sunday Child* (1893). Is the poet's dream of life a reality? Does life justify the artistic effort to see in it something more than a rude awakening? Are all our longings airy nothingness, or are they the subtle recognition of the true worth of life which is ever eluding us? And therefore are we right in honoring the poet as the prophet of the coming day, as the realizer of this true worth, as one who sets before us that which is in life though we do not see it, that which creates our longing though we do not know it? Spielhagen's novel leaves these questions unanswered, except as it answers them by spreading over the toil and hurry of all our material drudgery an atmosphere of sweet repose. It is with us everywhere we go, inspiring confidence and trust and strength. We move in a fairy world of unseen powers, and these powers are the ideals of humanity.

In Gottfried Keller's novels we observe a most felicitous union of the perspective employed by Alexis and the perspective sought by Spielhagen. He came nearer to achieving the national ideal of German novelists than any other writer of his day. But Keller was not, strictly speaking, a German. He was born in Zurich, Switzerland (1819). Only nine years of his life were spent in Germany proper—two in Munich (1840–1842) studying painting, seven in Heidelberg and Berlin (1848–1855) studying problems of civil government.

Keller's writings interest us most because they illustrate how much the success of such striving as that of Alexis and Spielhagen depends upon democratic environments. For the literary achievements of Keller were made possible by the democratic atmosphere in which he moved. Had he been a German, it is altogether likely that his genius would not have found the happy solution of the ideal and the real which marked the works of his second and third period.

Keller was not always the calm, self-composed humorist which he proved himself to be in the collection of short stories, *The People of Seldwyla*. He was, in his early years, a hot-headed, often fantastic, idealist. Nature had given him a goodly share of egotism. He wanted his own way, and was not overzealous in considering the rights of others when these stood in his way. A boy who at school was sufficiently obstreperous to cause his expulsion is pretty sure to have cast his lot as man with the revolutionists in Germany, had Germany been his home. And indeed the manner in which he welcomed the poems of Anastasius Grün, of Herwegh, and of Freiligrath, and influenced by these writers awoke to the consciousness of his poetic calling, only confirms this conclusion. All his life he remained irascible, impetuous, volcanic in his personal relations. He could burst into tears at the most trivial mishap, or into uncontrollable rage at a supposed slight. Yet the poetry of this man rose superior to his faults, and the lack of balance in personal character stands in surprising contrast to the sturdy and winsome character of his writings.

Again and again German critics and German poets have

directed attention to the greatness of Keller as a novelist. Paul Heyse went so far as to call him "the Shakespeare of German story-tellers," and more recently, R. M. Meyer was tempted to say of him, "On July 15, 1890, the greatest poet whom Germany has had since Goethe, gently dreamed himself into the silence of eternity." Granting that these praises overshoot the mark, one may always speak of Keller as a great poet, and it is the more surprising that in Germany proper and among a people whose language he handled with such pithy vigor and picturesque vividness, Keller remained so long unknown and never became popular.

Was it because his stories moved amid scenes not familiar to German readers? Hardly. Schiller's *Tell* played in Switzerland, and Heyse's stories, to mention but one of the many popular novelists of those days, shunned German soil!

Was it because Keller was not to the manor born? Still less probable. Scott, Dickens, Bulwer, Zola, Tolstoi, Ibsen, and innumerable others were household names in Germany long before the century closed!

Was there anything crude or unwieldy in his style, or too much of local speech or dialectical phrasing? Nor that either. His style has a certain epic broadness, but also epic directness. It creates before the very eyes of the reader situations and incidents, and hardly permits him to feel that words and sentences are descriptions of something that is not present. Keller has his localisms, but they are like touches of bright color in his pictures, never disturbing, always deepening interest.

Was the substance of his stories, the tale, the plot, something that German readers might not readily appreciate? No. There was his first important novel, *Green Henry* (1855, rewritten 1880), the story in fiction of his own youthful struggles, with more fiction than truth; the story of a youth educated by sober contact with life from mere æsthetic contemplation to active citizenship. Well, Goethe's *William Meister*, and Immermann's *Epigoni*, and Spielhagen's so widely read *Problematical Characters*, and Mörike's *Maler Nolten*, prove that this theme was thoroughly German. There were his stories of *Seldwyla* (first

volume, 1856, second, 1874) sparkling with wit and truly noble humor; stories of a town, everywhere and nowhere, whose citizens are given over to the pursuit of vagaries and whims. In Keller's day, Wieland's *Abderiten* (1776) was possibly no more than a literary curiosity; but still fresh in the memory of the German people were the stories of *Till Eulenspiegel* and the *Schildbürger*. Three centuries old, they bore testimony to the ability of the Germans to appreciate just such tales as Keller told in these two volumes. There were his *Seven Legends* (1872), an apotheosis of all that is sweet and wholesome in life, snatched from the ascetic fabrications of monks, and blending the fantastic and the real in a manner which Germans of all people know how to value. There were his *Züricher Novellen* (Tales of Zurich, 1878), and his collection of stories entitled *Sinngedicht* (Epigram, 1881), technically the best productions of his pen. Germans, too, cherished the chronicle stories of olden times and gave a warm welcome to W. H. Riehl's *Stories of Ancient Times*. Yet the artificial naïveté of Riehl's realistic style is painfully apparent to any one who has read Keller's *Tales of Zurich*, fascinating in the simple objectivity with which they depict in human character the wealth of human ideas. And Germans never tired of Victor Scheffel's chronicle of St. Gaul, *Ekkehard*, nor ever lavished more enthusiastic praises upon any poem than upon Scheffel's chronicle in verse, *The Trumpeter of Säckingen* (1854). Yet for some reason Keller's *Tales of Zurich* were neglected. Nor was his collection *Epigram* more popular in Germany, though he wove these stories in a charming manner around the experience of a book-worm who, in search for a wife, tries the virtue of Logau's epigram: —

Wie willst du weisse Lilien zu roten Rosen machen?
Küss' eine weisse Galathee: sie wird errötend lachen.¹

And yet, the book-worm, redeemed by love, was a theme on which German popular literature had rung the changes.

¹ How wouldst thou change the lily white to rose of ruddy glow?
Go, kiss a Galathea white, her blushing smiles will show!

Wilhelm Jensen's *Brown Erica* (1868) established its poetic availability in Germany. And finally, there was Keller's *Martin Salander*, a problematical story of present-day life, an effort to conceive what present values portended in the way of new realities, a tale of Swiss life as Immermann's *Epigoni*, Alexis's *Isengrimm*, Spielhagen's novels, Freytag's *Debit and Credit*, had been tales of the great problems of contemporary German life. It was the problem of individual existence enlarged to the problem of social existence, the problem of *Green Henry* transferred into national life, somewhat as in Immermann's *Epigoni* the question of individual character resolved itself into the question of national character. Surely it might be expected that German hearts would warm to such an attempt. Yet *Martin Salander* seems to have touched no sympathetic chord.

If *milieu*, style, and plot did not exclude Keller's novels and short stories from general appreciation in Germany, what did? The perspective! The author saw and reproduced life as a democrat pure and simple. But was not the perspective of Scott's *Waverley Novels* democratic? And were they not read with greater appreciation because of this perspective? Yes. Then why was Keller's perspective less acceptable than Scott's? For two reasons. First, the perspective of Scott's novels was not as unqualifiedly democratic as that of Keller's, though his democracy, such as it was, was just as unreflective. Second, the customs Scott depicted were, for Germans, customs of a foreign people whose democracy they were the more willing to admire, since it represented their own ungratified longing. Keller created his situations, characters, and actions as indigenous to German life. The spirit of the German race throbbed in every story as it throbbed in the language he spoke. But real as his democracy was for his Swiss readers, it could seem only unreal to his German readers. His local interpretation of the spirit of the German race was unintelligible to Germans at large. The two reasons deserve somewhat closer study. They shed the best light on the position which Keller occupies in German literature.

Scott was as catholic in his views of life as Keller. But his

catholicity manifested itself by transfusing the forms of society with the spirit of democracy and emphasizing sturdy manhood without doing away with social distinctions. His poor highlander is as much a man as his highland chief. But the distinction between lower and higher forms of expressing manhood remains. His novels recognize class, though a man is a man for all that. The democracy of Scott's society is spiritual rather than intellectual or even civic. Keller's society can claim not merely this spiritual democracy, but intellectual and civic democracy as well. It is not enough to say that he knows no privileged classes; he hardly knows what class is. Society is for him a compact whole. Social distinctions do not exist.

Schiller has been criticised for letting the Swiss peasants in *William Tell* speak as they do. What peasant, it is asked, would utter such thoughts? The peasants and simple burghers of the life that Keller studied and depicted is the reply. To a German these peasants seem curiously unreal. But Keller was no idealist when he depicted peasant and burgher life. His people speak as they think and they think as they speak, and they do both as Keller knew them to do it in everyday life. Theirs was the inestimable benefit of democratic government and democratic culture. A compact nationality, self-educated to the duties and privileges of citizenship, leaders in the widest possible dissemination of knowledge as the best guaranty of civic progress and justice,—could Keller, a Swiss, depict the life of this people as anything else than a civic and intellectual democracy?

This perspective gives to situations, characters, and actions their true proportions. They are supremely real. His individuals are not equal in civic worth and intellectual capacity, but shade off in wonderfully fine lines thereby enhancing the effect. Paragons and deep-dyed villains do not challenge our credulity, nor are we wearied by the persistent greetings of familiar faces in new garments. One of the triumphs of Keller's art is the ever new form in which humanity presents itself. And this is the glory of his social democracy, that it

recognizes the inviolable right of individuality, since it founds state and society upon the achievement of individual worth. Ethic manhood is something that neither state nor society can impart. It lies in the power of the individual to make or unmake his life, and he alone can solve the secret of his personality. Easier it is for him to do so amid surroundings that open his heart to the great glory of life, but still he alone can do so. That is Keller's doctrine.

Keller grew to manhood in surroundings which were as nearly identical with Schiller's philosophic ideal of freedom as human conditions can well be. The Switzerland of his manhood days was the best possible justification of the ideal picture that Schiller drew in *William Tell*. Therefore the optimism of Keller is so sturdy, so free from sentimentality, and so thoroughly human. His poetry is the noblest consummation of Heine's gospel of the divine beauty of life. Keller believed with all his soul in the self-redemption of society, and used the word society in its broadest signification. And his belief was vitalized by that which he saw in Swiss life. The germs of the past were bearing fruit in the present, and in the present the germs of a future harvest were swelling. He was not one of those complacent optimists who cannot discern with critical eye and whose complacency deadens the best impulses and stands in the way of energetic striving. Swiss life in his stories is by no means a paradise. His words to B. Auerbach (June 25, 1860) betoken the attitude he took toward this life, as they also reveal the genuine democracy of his artistic striving: "Here in Switzerland we have, to be sure, many good qualities, and in respect to public character, evidently at present an honest purpose to acquire respectable and inspiriting forms of living, and the people is proving itself plastic (mobile), happy, and buoyant; but all is not gold that glitters by any means. However, I consider it the duty of a poet not merely to glorify the past, but to strengthen the present, the germs of the future, and beautify it in such a manner that people may still be able to believe: yes, we are like that, and that is the course of our life. If poets do this with a certain measure of kindly

irony which deprives their productions of false pathos, then I am convinced that the people will come to be in fact and in appearance what it good-naturedly imagines itself to be and what even now it really is in its inmost disposition."

Politically Keller was a Swiss to the backbone. Incorporation of Switzerland in the German nation was for him a thought so horrible that when there was talk in certain circles of nationalizing all the German-speaking races, he threatened to shoot himself on the day which brought such calamity to his country. In spite of these political views Keller believed in a national German literature. He held to the idea that the nationality of literature is not determined by political boundaries, but by a common language. For community of language means community of ideals. Though in some districts these ideals may be more nearly realized or closer to the surface of everyday consciousness than in others, yet the community of language proves that the different districts have the same spiritual soil. His views recall Schenkendorf's poem, *Mothertongue*. Germany was, therefore, regarded by Keller as a second fatherland, and there was no affectation in the lines of his poem : —

Wohl mir, dass ich dich endlich fand,
Du stiller Ort am alten Rhein,
Wo, ungestört und ungekannt,
Ich Schweizer darf und Deutscher sein.¹

His poetry expressed, not merely verities of Swiss life, but verities of German life. He wrote as a member of the German race. The reality of Swiss democracy gave him the key to the social idealism of Germany. Provincial life was in his case a poetic vantage toward which he perceived the lines of German development converging. Considered as a German poet (not as a Swiss poet), Keller was the greatest symbolist of his day. For his symbolism was real in that it expressed through a pro-

¹ 'Tis well that thee I found at last,
Thou quiet nook on the dear old Rhine,
Where, undisturbed and unbeknown,
A Swiss and German I may be.

vincial reality the ideal for which a nation was striving. He was never troubled by the thought, which so often disturbed Alexis, that his symbol might convey no meaning to his readers outside of the narrow domain which it embodied. With sublime faith in the final victory of all that was best in the German race, whose language he spoke and for whom he wrote, Keller told his stories without reflection. Not once were his symbols labelled. To him the destiny of German society was revealed, as a self-evident fact, in the communal life of Switzerland.

If one were looking for further proof of the determining power that lies in such democratic surroundings, one might find it in Keller's last novel, *Martin Salander*. Toward the end of the poet's life Swiss conditions underwent a change. Influences from the great world without were undermining the stanch character of its society. New problems had to be faced. Keller's perspective required to be readjusted. He still held to his optimism, but his clear vision was clouded. That which was to come appeared problematical, and the poet began to give way to the preacher. His irony in *Martin Salander* lost some of its kindly nature. At times it was biting. And so in this last novel Keller became very much of a Spielhagen. He was *trying* to see.

CHAPTER XII

SOCIALISM AND THE INDIVIDUAL

THE CONFLICT BETWEEN REALISM AND IDEALISM

WILDENBRUCH, SUDERMANN, HAUPTMANN, ANZENGRUBER

I hear the dirge of beauty sped, and faith
Astray in space and time's far archways lost,
Till life itself becomes a tenuous wraith,
A wandering shade whom wandering shades accost.

Their light, sad plaint I hear who thus divine
The future, counselling that all is done —
Naught left for art's sweet touch — but to refine,
For courage — but to face the setting sun.

STEDMAN'S lines in *Fin de Siècle* paraphrase the great struggle which the last decades of the nineteenth century witnessed in German literature. It was a struggle to the bitter end to make the real express an ideal. All the hopes and disappointments of the century, its superb optimism and its imperious pessimism, whirl and flash before our eyes. Science had come to the aid of poetry and justified its ambition. The Darwinian theory of evolution applied to society could mean only one thing: the continual rebirth of life — in the womb of the present, the child of the future.

Contemporaneously with the great attempt of Spielhagen to read the riddle of his day, other poets had been forced into a sentimental glorification of life which threatened a return to the vagaries of romantic dreamland; still others had sought their ideal in primitive social forms which the tide of modern life was ruthlessly sweeping away; and yet others gave up the search for new ideals and raised the old banner of the eighteenth century, proclaiming that there is "naught left for art's sweet touch — but to refine."

The age was gradually growing pessimistic of itself. Theodor Storm's *Immensee* (1851), and later short stories of the same author, Scheffel's *Trumpeter of Säkkingen*, Robert Hamerling's *Ahasver* (1866), and *Swansong of Romanticism* (1862), Wilhelm Jensen's stories and novels, and above all Emanuel Geibel's poems, were saturated with a sentimentalism that threatened to send poetry back again in search for "the blue flower."

Berthold Auerbach's stories of village life in the Black Forest, Fritz Reuter's tales in dialect of Mecklenburg peasantry, Petri Rosegger's pastels of Styrian landscape and Styrian folk, were retro-spective rather than pro-spective. In the simpler forms of country life limited by locality they poured the unsatisfied longings of their hearts. In his preface to *Forest Home*, Rosegger wrote: "We call those men dreamers who are concerned more with the past than with the present, or even with plans and hopes for the future. The past is concluded and finished; it stands before us as a whole. It is a dream, and yet, I say, it is the most real of all our possessions, because it is unchangeable and imperishable."

One may grant that Reuter and Rosegger made this past artistically real, without closing one's eyes to the fact that in doing so they gave up the attempt to which Spielhagen was devoting his life and which Keller stated so succinctly in his letter to Auerbach (*supra* p. 300).

And finally Gustav Freytag, whose *Debit and Credit* popularized the poetic search for the ideal content of modern life, failed to make good the promise of this novel, and by the publication of his treatise, *Technique of the Drama* (1863), no less than by his *Pictures of German Past* (1859 ff.), and his novel series, *The Ancestors* (1872 ff.), proved how far he had been from comprehending the true secret of contemporary art striving. Poetry became for him no more and no less than an artificially refined form of life, such as Paul Heyse and the so-called Munich School very soon made of it in practice. Pseudo-classicism was in its very nature a confession of poetic inability to see the potential values of contemporary society.

With political problems pressing on all sides for solution, it is not strange that the great ethical problem of social life was for so many years incapable of inspiring poetic activity. The military conflict in Prussia, the war with Denmark over Sleswick-Holstein, and the resulting conflict between Prussia and Austria (war of 1866) diverted attention from questions that seemed of less immediate importance and dealt with less tangible realities. With few exceptions poets were shunning the present as a fruitless theme.

The Franco-German War of 1870 brought no change. Long since the enthusiasm which was supposed to attach itself to a war so loudly proclaimed as national had flared out. The holy fires that burned and glowed in the poetry of the Wars of Liberation were not to be revived, despite the efforts of Ernst von Wildenbruch. Spielhagen was right: German unity was no longer an affair of the heart, it was now one merely of the mind. And though this great ideal of national life born in the first decade of the century still had sentimental and practical value, it was now poetically dead, for it had lost its potential character: Germany was united.

Of the three principles for which a whole century of poetry had raised its voice,—national unity, civic emancipation, social brotherhood,—only one—but that one the most fundamental of the three—might now inspire poetry. Around the theme of the rights and duties of the individual as member of a social organism poetry suddenly centred with such fierce intensity that beauty and all that can lay claim to beauty was for the moment crushed underfoot. Naturalism held the whip-hand over German art and drove its devotees through the slums of life with imperious pride.

One frequently hears the poetry of these last decades spoken of as a sign of decadence. It was anything but that. It was rather a sign of reawakening. Often unhealthy in its manifestations, it was not unwholesome in its tendency. German poets had slept too long, and the war of 1870 had only lulled the sleepers into deeper slumber. Awakened at last, they were dazed for a brief space by the glare of light and the din

of busy activity. Impressions failed to blend, objects stood out in undue proportions, sounds struck the ear that in a normal awakening would have small heed, and, stripped of its usual correlation of ideas, the world seemed to lie naked before the gaze. The senses worked independently of each other and crowded images upon the brain that appeared to other men like fancies of a diseased mind. But they were only abnormally distinct observations of individual facts, abnormally distinct because the mind of poets operated only with one set of impressions. The unusual was forced into the category of the usual; the usual assumed the value of the unusual.

In the last years of the eighth decade, the social problem began to assume proportions which thinking men could no longer ignore. The work of Lassalle, Karl Marx, and Friedrich Engels was bearing fruit. The international social democracy of Marx had superseded the national ideal of Lassalle. The partial adoption of the views of Lassalle by Bismarck only added fuel to the fire. Social democracy began to preach the emancipation of the individual. Society was to be deprived of its political character. It was declared that society had outgrown the idea of state as well as of class, and in a great association of human beings the free development of the individual was to form the basis of the free development of all. To this end existing methods of acquisition, the rights of private property and of private production were to be abrogated and vested in a social association, that all might enjoy an equal opportunity of development.

It is easy to see how men, influenced by such views, should in time endeavor to picture to themselves the probable future complexion of society under a social-democratic régime. The same tendency that called forth in America a book like E. Bellamy's *Looking Backward* was operative to a far greater extent in Germany. Men lost sight of present actualities in their speculative constructions of a Utopian reality. The social-democratic propaganda took on something of the glamour of poetry and invited poetic treatment.

It would, of course, be foolish to ascribe solely to industrial

conditions and the resulting social problems the feverish agitation that sent poets hurtling through life in a wild chase after the abnormal. Science had its share in increasing the general frenzy that laid hold of young men. Very early in the second half of the century, the popularization of science and the startling results of scientific research imparted a metaphysical character to scientific investigation. Scientists began to trench upon the domain of speculative philosophy. The failure of idealism seemed established by the revolution of 1848-1849. Materialism took its place, and the reactionary measures which German governments inaugurated in the following decade only helped to foster the materialistic spirit. Men like Moleschott, Vogt, and Büchner exerted a far-reaching influence on educated laymen.

This speculative tendency showed itself in the proceedings of the Convention of Natural Scientists held at Göttingen in 1854. Against the theory of the evolution of organic out of unorganic life Rudolph Wagner protested, opposing likewise the materialistic theory of the evolution of the species. His opposition only increased speculation. But science could not explain the apparent teleology in nature. Then appeared Darwin's book on *The Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection* (1859). Lamarck's *Principles of a Theory of Descent* had preceded Darwin's book, and Goethe as well as Schelling had expressed kindred views. But these earlier evolutionary theories had passed unnoticed. In the midst of the scientific effort to harmonize mechanical causality and cosmic teleology Darwin's book created a tremendous sensation. It gave a new impetus to speculative thought, not merely in academic circles, but throughout the cultured world of Germany. It tinged the pessimism of the age with optimism and made possible and popular the writings of Edward Hartmann. But it also strengthened the often brutal materialism of Karl Marx and gave the support of science — whether justly or unjustly — to the doctrines of social democracy.

Meanwhile to the East, to the North, and to the West, foreign literatures were laying bare the sores of social life. In Russia

Tolstoi and Turgeneff were uncovering the sins of their generation. From Scandinavia, and later from the classic home of art, Munich, Ibsen was sending his dramas of pessimism into the world. In France Zola had proclaimed the gospel of naturalism. These works were passing into German translations in editions upon editions.

In Germany a poet philosopher, at whose side sat the spectre of insanity, was spinning his thoughts into language of marvellous beauty. Like a veil of brilliant splendor it settled upon the minds of men. Friedrich Nietzsche is conceivable only as the product of artistic starvation. The value of art as an interpreter of the ideal content of contemporary life has hardly ever been more signally illustrated than through his life and writings. In him the unsatisfied longing of a generation for an artistic vision of its ideals finally burst its bonds. Had art fulfilled its mission in the seventh and eighth decades, Nietzsche would be almost inconceivable. His was a craving that stopped at nothing and, feeding upon itself in frenzied agony, found no relief until reason was extinguished. Much as his theories changed, they always flashed from a heart and brain quivering with impatience—for what? For the full manifestation of manhood!

This is not the place to discuss the philosophy of Nietzsche, but it is the place to point out that Nietzsche's works heralded a new day. He was not a poet, nor was he a philosopher; and because he was neither, but a curious compound of both, he was such a significant portent of the times. He tried to be reflective and imaginative at one and the same time, or possibly he could not help being both. Somehow one is reminded of Heine's lines:—

Thy lictor am I, and follow behind,
And carry in all its splendor
The polished executioner's axe—
I'm the deed which thy thoughts engender.

For Nietzsche was both lictor and consul. He not only strove to see the ideal content of modern life, but he reconstructed this life to meet the demands of the ideal. Pitilessly he pro-

claimed the rule of the "Overman" and the doctrine of artificial selection. Ruthlessly he trod upon the rights of the weak and asserted the right of the strong to exterminate the weak — that life might be redeemed. His one great aim was "to see science from the point of view of the artist, art from the point of view of life." His earliest important work, *Birth of Tragedy out of the Spirit of Music* (1872), and the publications of his last years of lucid thought glowed with the passion of a reformer. In rhapsodic strains he glorified the longing for individuality perfected. In rapturous pæans — *Thus Spake Zarathustra* (1883), *Beyond Good and Evil* (1886) — he sang of the inherent power of life to satisfy the craving for full, unstinted manhood. And like a rain of sparks, his meteoric constructions ignited all the combustible material accumulated by decades of unsatisfying poetic activity.

Into this society, teeming with contrasting emotions and troubled by the contradictions of its own volition, a new generation was born,—a generation to whom the struggle for national unity and for civic emancipation were historic facts; who had not shared in these struggles, and for whom they had no poetic significance. The coming poets of Germany were reared in academic seclusion and shut off from contact with the problems of their day by pedagogical methods that substituted text-books for vital forms. They breathed the air of classic antiquity without a suspicion of its artificial qualities. And then, plunging into the stream of life in the ninth decade of the last century, they were spun around by its thousand eddies. Even older men, like Ernst von Wildenbruch, were caught in the cross-current and swept from their course. To reach the deep, steady current of midstream was no easy task, and few who clung to the driftwood of poetry ever escaped from the whirlpools along the brink.

The literary work of the three most promising writers of the waning century — Ernst von Wildenbruch, Hermann Sudermann, and Gerhart Hauptmann — showed all the characteristic phases of this struggle for the ideal values of life. Their poetry tried to solve the great problem of ethical individuality. In

the individual soul they saw the reflection of a social longing and in individual character the product of the conflict between that which is and that which is to be. In their works the individual stands not merely for his age, but for a coming age begotten in his age.

Ernst von Wildenbruch was not so unqualifiedly modern as Sudermann and Hauptmann. Indeed he was more what one might call a modernized Schiller with Shakespearian tendencies. He sought his ideals in the past, viewed the present in the light of what had been, and endeavored to depict historic events as portents of modern achievements or as symbols of modern conditions. His artistic perspective was like that of Alexis. Sudermann and Hauptmann gazed from the present into the future and are better likened unto Spielhagen.

The literary fame of Wildenbruch came to him comparatively late in life. Born February 3, 1845, in Beirut, Syria, the son of the Prussian consul at that place, he spent his childhood abroad. In a large measure this fact accounts for his enthusiastic love of country and for his harping on outlived ideals. True to the ancient tradition of Prussian nobility, he was educated for a military career. Soon after receiving his commission he resigned from the army and turned to the study of law. After participating in the Franco-German War, he devoted himself to his profession, and then (1887) entered the foreign service.

Enthusiastic nationalist as he was, Wildenbruch chafed under German submission to French taste, particularly in literary matters. In his heart there was roused something of a fierce resentment that the glorious achievements of the war should go unsung. To this feeling we owe his two heroic songs, *Vionville* (1874) and *Sedan* (1875), and the increasing interest he took in poetry. These two poems were quickly followed by the dramas *The Carolingians*, *The Mennonite*, *Fathers and Sons*. But so powerful was the French influence on the German stage that the first of these was not produced until 1881. The sixth of February of that year, when the celebrated Meininger

company played *The Carolingians* at the court theatre in Weimar, marked a new epoch in the history of the stage in Germany. Not only did the fame of Wildenbruch, together with a growing productiveness, date from that day, but a new impetus was given to dramatic activity. Conventional restrictions and narrow views were gradually cast aside, and the young generation entered with enthusiasm into the new strife which Wildenbruch had heralded.

With few exceptions Wildenbruch's dramas viewed life from the angle from which he saw it when writing *The Carolingians*. When he attempted to change his point of view, he met with failure, as in the dramas *A Sacrifice for a Sacrifice* and *The Crested Lark*. He was not the man to succeed where Goethe had failed in *Stella*, nor capable of recognizing the artistic motive obscured by the labor question of his day. The crudeness of the technique of Wildenbruch in his first drama and the absence of psychological refinement permit a ready discernment of the peculiar character of his artistic vision.

Wildenbruch saw his individuals amid an environment that resembles a physical mass. The individual appeared to him like the soul of the mass-body. To this body as conceived by Wildenbruch the words of Goethe's Faust might be applied: —

Two souls, alas, within my bosom dwell.

For Wildenbruch's inert human mass harbors two types of individuality. In *The Carolingians* Bernhardt and Ludwig represent these two. The one is the man of well-defined purpose and iron will, the incarnation of egotism; he crushes underfoot everything and everybody that oppose him. The other, loving, generous, unselfish, dreaming of greater things than power, is incapable of wielding the mass, and still less capable of resisting it as it is wielded by his counterpart.

This dual individuality in the mass is the great theme of Wildenbruch's dramas. It sounds like pessimism when Wildenbruch makes it appear that only the supremely selfish and thoroughly unscrupulous individual can hope for success in life. And if this were all, it would be distinctly pessimistic. But

here we have to reckon with a second aspect of his art. In *The Carolingians*, King Ludwig represents the better consciousness of his day. The ideals which by their vagueness consummate his ruin are, as a matter of fact, ideals which later generations have realized. The idea of imperial unity which Ludwig cherishes in the drama was a present fact for every German who saw or read the drama. What at first seems like pessimism unadulterated is thereby transfigured into the optimism of history.

Amid the revolutionary, often hasty and inconsiderate, clamor of youthful naturalists, Wildenbruch for a long time held to his own ideal—the historic drama as interpreting the great truths of human progress. This is true of *Harold* (1882), *Christopher Marlowe* (1884), *The New Commandment* (1885), *The Prince of Verona* (1886), *The Quitzows* (1888), *The Lieutenant General* (1889), *The New Lord* (1891). In the last three of these dramas the influence of naturalistic theories began to make itself felt, and one is hardly astonished to find Wildenbruch choosing in *The Crested Lark* (1891) a theme of modern life and experimenting with the social problem. But in *Henry and Henry's Race* (1895) he returned to his old ideal.

Henry and Henry's Race is the most ambitious and, on the whole, the most artistic work of Wildenbruch's pen. It is a refreshing contrast to *Holy Laughter* (1892), an allegorical farce set to music, in which Wildenbruch foolishly ventured to vitalize abstractions—pessimism and optimism. In the double tragedy *Henry and Henry's Race* (*King Henry* and *Emperor Henry*) Wildenbruch again adopted the method employed in *The Carolingians* and in his Brandenburg or Hohenzollern tragedies. The present supplies the optimistic perspective for individual failure in the past.

On July 18, 1870, the Roman Catholic Church proclaimed the dogma of infallibility. In Germany, particularly in Prussia, this proclamation was regarded as challenging the authority of the state and the divine right of kings. Unfortunately the aristocratic principle, embodied in Bismarck, had confirmed the popular mind in its identification of state and government, and

in consequence of this identification, which was both sentimental and practical, the proclamation of ecclesiastical infallibility led to a most embittered renewal of the ancient conflict between empire and hierarchy. The revolt of the Young Germans against ecclesiastical authority earlier in the century was essentially a protest against the clergy as another form of unjustifiable autocracy. Subsequent to the revolution, however, this revolt assumed the character of a conflict between two autocratic principles — government and church. Frederick William IV, “the Romanticist on the Throne of the Cæsars,” as David Strauss dubbed him, succeeded in compromising with the Papal authority. But the new German empire could not, considering the principles upon which it was founded, ignore the new challenge of the church. The so-called “Kultur Kampf” broke out in all its diplomatic fury, and the gage which the Papal bull of 1870 cast down was picked up by Bismarck. His celebrated assertion (May 14, 1872), “No, to Canossa we’ll not go!” became the watchword of the imperialists. That the man who uttered these words was himself forced to negotiate with the church only prolonged the strife and emphasized its importance in the public mind. But the empire withstood the shock. From the vantage of this modern “Kultur Kampf,” Wildenbruch looked back upon the past and viewed the eventful life of Henry IV of Germany.

Three times we see Henry at his best, and each time his generous impulses are foiled by the unscrupulous methods of his opponents. He is a noble-hearted, affectionate boy; but the sweetness of his nature is turned to bitterness through the treachery of Archbishop Anno of Cologne. He becomes a repentant, self-sacrificing man, ready and willing to make his peace with the Pope, that his people may prosper; but the new hope and light bursting into life in the soul of the king are rudely darkened by the imperious treachery and purpose of Gregory. He would be a father to his nation, bringing peace and good-will to all provinces and classes of the land; but the ideal of the emperor is ruthlessly frustrated by his own son, the ambitious opportunist, Henry V. Henry IV is nobler

than his day, and because he is nobler, one of two things must happen, — either he must be untrue to his essential nature, put his dreams aside, and adapt his individual longings to the character of his surroundings, or he must perish. In either case the ethical individual is defeated. Whenever Henry IV sacrifices his nobler impulses, he is materially successful ; whenever he seeks to follow their lead, misfortune trails in his path. Henry V succeeds where his greater father failed ; for he knows how to utilize to his own ends the forces that encompass him. He is not an idealist and does not feel the sublime touch of the future in the present. The tragedy of the life of Henry is the tragedy of individual hopes unfulfilled. Dying he kisses his repentant wife, Praxedis, and exclaims : “ See here all my youth, all my hopes of happiness and joy of life ! Farewell youth, that didst bring me no fruition ! Farewell hope, that wast followed by no reality ; life, that didst lift me to mountain heights only to dash me, broken and crushed, into the depths ! Thus I kiss myself loose from thee ! ”

Against this pessimistic conception of the individual and his age, Wildenbruch holds up the mirror of history. For history brought the fruition of Henry’s hopes. Compared with the days of yore, Germany seemed to Wildenbruch to have fulfilled the longing that he put into the heart of Henry. And under the impression of this conviction, he closed his drama with the burial scene of Henry IV. Weeping and wailing, the common people crowd around his bier and curse his destroyer. Even the successful cynic, Henry V, is moved by the sight, and from his pale lips burst the words : —

Wer hat mir gelogen, dass ich der Kaiser sei ?
Dieser Tote, das ist der Deutschen König.¹

And this conception of ethical manhood as the prophecy of future progress made the dramas of Wildenbruch so welcome to his countrymen.

¹ A liar who proclaimed me emperor !

This dead one here, he is the German King.

— *Kaiser Heinrich*, Act V, 2.

It is not necessary to confine one's self to these tragedies of German national history in order to see how completely Wildenbruch typified in the struggle of the individual the progress of civilization. Harold, the Anglo-Saxon, breaks the letter of his oath to William the Conqueror in order to save his country. But in those days the letter controlled the spirit. Harold is defeated by popular superstition. Modern life, however, has justified his ethical ideal. In the short story, *The Master of Tanagra*, Myrtolaos fails in his great striving because he cannot follow in the footsteps of Praxiteles and subordinate his moral being to the demands of realistic art. Yet posterity has acknowledged the beauty of his figures and Tanagra is now world-famed. The ideals of the individual are the dreams of humanity which some day come true, but because they are dreams, the individual is lost in the reality of his generation.

Neither Sudermann nor Hauptmann possessed this perspective of history. They were not content to say, as Wildenbruch might have said: Rest assured that your bitter conflicts portend a better state of society! It has ever been thus. All your vague longing will some day be realized in the body social, for you are the better soul that in the future will direct its actions. Sudermann and Hauptmann desired to see this better day of the future as clearly as Wildenbruch saw in the present the better future of the past. They tried to picture the individual in his relation to modern society and, by doing so, to lay bare the soul of modern civilization. But the efforts of Sudermann took a different direction from those of Hauptmann. The former was a North German, and wrote amid the busy scenes of the German metropolis; the latter was a South German, and sent most of his writings into the world from quiet rural retreat. Sudermann stood before the sphinx of life and demanded answer to the question, What is the moral worth of society? Hauptmann raised his wistful eyes and queried, What is its spiritual worth?

Hermann Sudermann was born in the northern tip of East Prussia, in the borough of Heydekrug, September 30, 1857.

After attending the gymnasium at Tilsit and the university at Königsberg, he went to Berlin to complete his literary studies. Here he came face to face with the visible signs of moral ferment, and in contact with the war of pens waged by Karl Bleibtreu, Conrad Alberti, Hermann Conradi, Max Kretzer, and so many others.

The wordy and yet so passionate struggle for a new art was just beginning, and as it waxed warm Sudermann surrendered unconditionally not to any theories, but to the principle it proclaimed: Find for us in the real the ideal we are seeking! The aim of Sudermann was, and probably still is, to portray life in such a way that the moral ideas of his day may come to expression. To that end all the phenomena of social intercourse, whether inspiring or repulsive, have, as he believed, a claim to careful consideration on the part of the artist. The artist is bound to present life as he sees it, provided he can see it as the embodiment of an idea. That Sudermann endeavored to view life in this manner cannot be disputed. That he always succeeded in depicting it in its true proportions must, however, be denied. Often he wrote in a pessimistic, despairing mood, and in the bitterness of the moment uncovered the cesspools of society.

Morality is for Sudermann a relative, not an absolute term. Moral ideas change, and the individual is not always immoral if his ideas disagree with those of his age. Often he is ahead of his time, and his inability to fit into the life of his generation is more frequently the sign of an enlarging moral vision. And so he asked himself the question: What is the moral conception of life that the individual represents in his conflict with conventional standards? What is the great, fundamental, moral truth which, though dimly perceived, puts him at odds with his surroundings and so often makes a wreck of his own morality because he fails to discern it clearly?

In his second novel, *The Cat's Bridge* (1889), Sudermann formulated the following answer: "As he (*i.e.* Boleslav, the hero of the story) pondered, lost in thought, it seemed to him as if the mists that separate the reality of human existence from human consciousness were lifted, and as if his gaze penetrated

a little deeper than that of the ordinary mortal into the depth of the unconscious. That which is called the "good" and the "bad" surged aimlessly among the mists of the surface; beneath, its energies, wrapt in silent revery, rested — the *natural*." Evidently a cheap and easy answer had not the poet attempted to give in his various works a vision of this natural with its energies wrapped in silent revery beneath the surging mists of the surface. In his efforts to trace this vision the social instinct of Sudermann guided his pen. And with the manner and results of its guidance we are chiefly concerned.

In the same year (1887) in which Sudermann published his first collection of short stories under the significant title *In the Twilight*, there was appearing in the "feuilleton" of the *Berliner Tageblatt* a serial story by the same author, — *Dame Care*. Everywhere the novel was discussed, and, in Berlin at least, Sudermann was heralded as the poet of the hour. And this was his first novel!

Two qualities of the novel, its realistic style and its moral theme, were responsible for its success. Here was a picture of country life stripped of idyllic glamour, so composed that the ethics of modern society revealed themselves to the beholder. Sudermann asked himself: What is to become of the individual in the stress of modern life? How is he to do justice to himself and to others? In fact, can he under existing social conditions harmonize self and society, or is he not forced into one of two extremes: self-sacrifice or selfishness? Self-sacrifice is quixotic, selfishness is degrading; neither is ethically satisfying nor morally justifiable.

A well-to-do farmer loses his estate through speculation and thriftlessness. The oldest boys of the family are provided for through the kindness of a distant relative; the youngest, Paul, remains at home to shoulder the burdens of the family. Dame Care rocked his cradle and Dame Care was his silent companion all through childhood years. A troubled, mystical mother had taken him to her heart and taught him humility and unselfishness. It is unnecessary to follow the story of his self-sacrifice in detail. The intense selfishness and pride of others force him

beyond humility and unselfishness. In his quixotic self-abasement he is blind to the unmistakable signs of affection shown for him by the woman he loves. He considers the daughter of the wealthy purchaser of his former home too good and sweet for such as he. In his absurd self-sacrifice he stunts his artistic craving, labors like a faithful animal for his sisters, and finally, to cap the climax of his hysterical self-effacement, he sets fire to the farm buildings, which represent the toil of years, in order to save his half-witted father from committing arson on the property of a fancied enemy.

And what has all this sacrifice of self achieved? Nothing! Literally nothing. The results are negative. The woman who loves him is made unhappy; the world is deprived of his artistic talents; his sisters grow up without moral strength because of his coddling; his fellow-men are confirmed in their selfishness because he makes unselfishness seem quixotic. His own moral sense is so warped that at a moment of fierce revulsion he forces a promise of marriage from the betrayer of his sister; and so strangely out of gear are his moral faculties that his actions finally become hysterical. Committed to prison for arson, he has time to ponder the folly of his past life, and after his release he is able to enjoy a modest kind of happiness with the woman whose love might long since have saved him.

The problem of *Dame Care* is, therefore, identical with the problem of individual striving which Wildenbruch treated, only that Sudermann found his problem in the domain of morals instead of politics. The trial scene makes it evident that unselfishness is not necessarily an ideal for which people have no sympathy. But the novel makes it just as evident that modern society has not recognized its value. It lies too deep beneath the surface to be effective in determining social intercourse. Consequently, men either look upon life from the purely individualistic point of view and living only for themselves become unscrupulous and selfish, or they suppress their individuality, see life wholly with the eyes of duty, and become quixotic in their self-immolation. Neither course accords with the moral law of nature.

Sudermann might, therefore, be accounted a rank pessimist were it not for the concluding pages of the novel. Even in this conclusion he is pessimistic in so far as he reads his own ideal of the natural into life. The realism of the novel suddenly changes into idealism. For the novelist no longer pictures what he has observed, but what he would like to see. Individuality developed in the consciousness of its social value that seems to Sudermann the natural moral law. But in the greater part of the novel this law is artistically revealed only in a negative manner, and negative processes are never wholly satisfying in works of art. The attempt to conclude with a positive revelation was an artistic failure.

Sudermann's second novel, *The Cat's Bridge*, was, if anything, more pessimistic than the first. Its theme was as modern as that of *Dame Care*, though Sudermann chose incidents of the wars with Napoleon for its setting. A glance at the plot will show how Sudermann subordinated the problem of national political life to the problem of morality.

Instigated by his desire to see Poland freed by the French, a wealthy East Prussian nobleman assists a detachment of French soldiery to escape across a secret bridge (the Cat's Bridge). In their flight the French surprise and annihilate a Prussian outpost. This occurs in the first years of the Napoleonic invasion. Shunned by all, a hermit protecting his life by strange devices, the old man lives among the ruins of his castle. Regina, the untutored and neglected daughter of a depraved villager and the irresponsible accomplice in his treacherous deed, is his only companion. She appears at first as a totally unmoral being. With the faithfulness of a dog she stands by her master. He dies during the wars of liberation and the villagers refuse interment in the cemetery. Regina buries her dead master at night in the park and guards his grave from desecration. Meanwhile Boleslav, the son, has fought in the War of Liberation under an assumed name, and through his bravery has won the Iron Cross. Returning home he finds Regina living like an outcast amid the ruins of his ancestral home. From her he hears the story of the death of

his father. He summons his former companions in arms, in a neighboring village, to assist him in burying the dead in consecrated soil. Unwillingly they accede to his request, and then cut loose from him. Thereafter, Boleslav undertakes to fight public opinion. His search for evidence of his father's innocence is futile. His attempts to reestablish himself fail signally. The villagers hate him with a mortal hatred. All that saves him is the sacrifice of her life by Regina. Boleslav seeks and finds death in the war that follows the return of Napoleon from Elba.

Sombre and morbid as the story must seem to a healthy mind, it is not without its saving optimism. In *The Cat's Bridge* this optimism is not an afterthought. Regina and Boleslav redeem each other, and this redemption is nobly symbolical of the great process of social evolution. Thrown into intimate intercourse and forced to rely upon each other, they constitute a society of their own. In community of material interests and of moral needs they work out their salvation. Moral character is not a personal, but a mutual concern. Their moral standards are living truths of their social intercourse. To be sure, constituted as society at large is, it is not possible for the few to live according to the natural law of social morality without sacrificing their inalienable right to that happiness which comes from sympathetic intercourse with their surroundings. For such as Boleslav and Regina, who have caught a glimpse of the higher social ideal, only the pathway of resignation is open.

A year after the publication of *The Cat's Bridge*, Sudermann appeared before the public with his first drama, *Honor* (1890). For a writer who saw in the revolt of the individual against conventional moral ideas the evidence of a new social morality, and who had proclaimed the rebirth of society in its outcasts, dramatic conception was inevitable. In *Honor* the dramatic poet came to his own. Whatever may be said against the play in some of its detail—for example, the introduction of Count Trast, a species of *deus ex machina*—the drama is forcible. Education and travel enlarge the moral horizon of Robert, the

hero. He returns home, a stranger to the ideas of morality that prevail among his relatives. Low and sordid they are, and low and sordid they seem to him. Attempting to force his family to his own point of view, he succeeds in making himself only an object of ridicule to them. Here we have the first clash of ideals. It is largely empirical. The second clash comes in the soul of Robert. His individuality struggles in vain against the insinuating force of the conventional idea of honor. He feels that he has been dishonored by the acts of his family, and yet he cannot help feeling that in the highest moral sense only he can dishonor himself. At the critical moment Count Trast intervenes and removes him from his surroundings.

The pessimistic picture of Berlin society presented in *Honor* took on hues of terrible brilliancy in Sudermann's next drama; *Sodom* (1891). The remnant of optimism still discernible in *Honor* vanished completely. In the miasmatic fumes that rise from the cesspool of modern city life manhood and womanhood flicker for a moment and then are snuffed out. The drama was well named. Naught but the horrors of depravity and the terrors of perdition! Doubtless such scenes are not infrequent occurrences in the life of a great city. But that they are typical of society as a whole, whether at Berlin or at any other metropolis, we refuse to believe. Nor could Sudermann accept his own picture as true. For in the following year he drew in *Magda* (Heimat, 1892) the logical consequences of the theme propounded in *Honor*. Scorning the evasive solution with which his first drama closed, he now preached the gospel of self-respect.

In *Magda* a twofold struggle of the individual is again expressed, one against the accepted rules of conduct, the other against the conventional ideal of repentance. Magda Schwartz has risen superior to the code which denies to women the independence of action it grants to men. Besmirched in her purity, she has yet forced the world to acknowledge her worth. As a great singer she feels her past course justified. What this course was is revealed step by step as the catastrophe approaches. The drama itself begins with the return of Magda

to her home. It asks the great question, Is it possible to reconcile individual independence with conventional morality? And the answer is: No!

Between old Major Schwartz, Magda's father, who is the stern champion of conventional moral standards, and Magda, his independent daughter, who is a law unto herself, there can be no lasting peace. In his philosophy womanly purity is incompatible with independence of living. Magda has sinned in his eyes by fleeing from the restraints of her home and making her own way in life. Worse still, she is unrepentant. Had she returned penitent, loathing herself for her sins, humbly seeking forgiveness,—in short, a prodigal daughter,—her father might see some hope for her. But her self-respect makes this impossible. As if to support the father's views, it appears that in her early struggles Magda has been betrayed by one Keller. Marriage with her former lover can satisfy the injured honor of her father and remove the stigma from the family name. The alternative is prescribed by the code of honor. Magda consents to the marriage, for she loves her father and would save him from the rash act which he threatens. But when the time-server and hypocrite, Keller, demands that she disavow her motherhood as well as her profession, then she stands firm. And Sudermann does not hesitate to draw the only logical conclusion. Frenzied by the refusal of his daughter, the old major is about to take her life when a stroke of paralysis lays him low. In vain Magda implores forgiveness of the dying man; in vain she pleads for a last sign of reconciliation; in vain she makes a last effort to assure him that she is pure now, noble and true, and that because she is all this she cannot act otherwise. Stolidly he turns his weary head away and expires. Alone, misunderstood, without a word of comfort, Magda stands there condemned by all.

In presenting this drama on the American stage, Modjeska altered its last moments. The father makes an effort to lay his hand in blessing on the head of his child. Inconsistent as this change may be with the character of Major Schwartz,—which by the way is an enigma to Americans,—it is supremely

regardful of the American attitude toward just such problems as the drama presents. Independence is not in America incompatible with purity, nor is the conception of honor so hide-bound as to require marriage under circumstances that degrade the individual. And yet it is to be feared that the dramatist put his finger upon a sore spot in our own moral life. We, too, may well ask ourselves whether self-abasement and utter contrition are not too often demanded as a sign of repentance, and whether our own conventional standards do not too often shut the door of social rehabilitation in the face of those who have sinned against them. It is, therefore, the tragedy of Magda's past that has greater human significance. Can a human being run counter to the accepted standards of human conduct without putting himself in a position that weakens his moral hold on life? Can he expect to pass unsmirched through the inevitable struggle for that which goes to make up his characteristic personality? And if once besmirched, can he profit society by the new strength acquired in his personal self-redemption? To Sudermann the moral standards of German society seemed too categorical to permit an affirmative answer, and in so far as categorical standards, in one form or another, prevail the world around, Sudermann disclosed a general truth of life.

All of Sudermann's works are full of a similar individualistic striving, though they do not always centre around it. *It Was* (1894) took up in novel form the theme of *Magda*. In the trials which are brought upon Leo von Halewitz because he "will regret nothing," the inevitable consequences of Magda's conception of repentance are more broadly treated.

Thrice Sudermann essayed to escape the pessimism into which the search for an ideal in modern life was thrusting him. The first two attempts, *Iolanthe's Wedding* (1892), a story bubbling over with humor, and *The War of Butterflies* (1895), a comedy attempting to pluck the sting out of the perversity of social ethics by an appeal to our sense of the ridiculous, availed him little. In 1896 he wrote his tragedy of resignation, *Happiness in Retreat* (Glück im Winkel), and put upon

the stage his three one-act dramas *Morituri*. The first and second of these, *Teja* and *Freddy*, found in death the great consummation of individual striving. The third, *The Eternal Masculine*, laughed to scorn the bitter necessity of death. But the laugh was forced and strident, and the bells of folly jingled with no merry sound. The art of Sudermann was baffled. It was his third and last attempt to free himself from pessimism without sacrificing his realistic art. But the poet could not recognize his ideal of social ethics in contemporary society.

From now on Sudermann's poetry was tinged with romanticism, and in the last work which came from his pen in the nineteenth century, *St. John's Fire* (1900), his passionate longing for a new ethical ideal was lost in a repulsive drama of the mysteries of the unknown. *St. John's Fire* was preceded by two tragedies, *John the Baptist* (1897, published 1898) and *The Three Heron Feathers* (1898), both convincing evidences of the futile effort of the poet to give expression to this new ethical ideal, whose unborn existence he and others were proclaiming as the cause of all modern unrest.

John the Baptist might have been a better drama had Sudermann disregarded popular prejudices. He was treading in the path which his contemporary Hauptmann had but recently taken. He was also attempting to phrase for his age the ideal content of its longing. But he had not the courage to disregard a conventional sentiment. Jesus, the embodiment of the supreme law of love, Sudermann did not put upon the stage. Had he done so, following his artistic inclination, he might have shocked many, but time would have justified his procedure. And for a poet holding his views of modern Christianity this disloyalty to an artistic purpose was fatal.

John the Baptist is not a historical drama after the manner of Wildenbruch's dramas, nor even after the manner of Heibel's *Herod*. If Sudermann had regarded modern society as the consummation of that new ideal which found its forerunner in John and its perfecter in Jesus, he would have conceived his drama as Wildenbruch conceived his tragedies.

Had he seen in those days of old and in the coming of Christ a great step forward in the drama of civilization, he would have occupied the poetic vantage of Hebbel. But Sudermann's drama had an entirely different perspective. Into the story of John the Baptist it projected the unrest of modern society. John grapples with the ideal of the Christ life in the same ineffectual manner as modern society seemed to Sudermann to be doing. Both, John and modern society, are haunted by the thought that this ideal can solve the social problem. But the problem cannot be solved as long as the Christ life remains a personal ideal, an ideal which individuals hold separately. It must become a social ideal, an ideal which men hold in conscious community, because they feel that the Christ life is a common possession. Sudermann regards the Christ love as the ideal of moral democracy, and the Christ life as the democracy of moral ideas. This democracy is the potential destiny that modern society would fulfil. In it is perfected the brotherhood of man.

Though Sudermann held this view of the mission of Jesus, and though he takes us back in his drama to the days when it was proclaimed to the world, he did not dare to give dramatic life to his conception of the social ethics of Jesus. Jesus is not a figure in the drama, and the more is the pity. For the "love" that trembles in the atmosphere of the play remains as vaguely intangible as an unrevealed mystery, and the moral struggle of John appears as morbidly aimless as the wail of a child for the moon. The drama makes a most pessimistic impression, and yet Sudermann conceived it with an optimistic purpose. He desired to show that love is active in life, and that men are endeavoring to comprehend its true, social meaning. But his artistic insincerity stamped his work with pessimism. The Christ love remains a mystery that bewilders and confounds men. And this artistic insincerity led to dramatic inconsistency. The drama fell apart in itself. Before the poet's vision of the long ago rose the spectre of the present. Starting with a vision of Jerusalem Sudermann concluded by seeing — Berlin. The one figure that might have held his vision true vanished into vague nothingness, and the modern

problem the dramatist had sought in the past took on forms that belong to the present.

In *The Three Heron Feathers*, Sudermann appears still more under the influence of Hauptmann. Indeed, so many are the points of resemblance between this drama and Hauptmann's *Sunken Bell* that, in the light of the sturdy endeavors of Sudermann in his earliest works, one is tempted to consider the drama a parody on Hauptmann's *Sunken Bell*. But the sympathy for the poetic methods of Hauptmann which Sudermann showed in *St. John's Fire* and *John the Baptist* makes this view untenable. *The Three Heron Feathers* dealt with the problem of social morality after the manner in which Hauptmann treated the problem of social spirituality. The same sense of individual loneliness that throbs through *The Sunken Bell* and that is phrased in the words of Henry —

Ich bin der Sonne ausgesetztes Kind,
das heim verlangt — ¹

finds its correlate in Sudermann's drama, and the same longing for an unutterable, unattainable bliss through union with a larger life controls the dramatic action. It forces from Prince Witte words not unlike those of Henry : —

Ich bin der Sehnsucht nimmermüder Sohn.²

In both dramas we find the same central problem — a striving for an ideal strongly felt, but vaguely conceived. In Sudermann's drama paralysis of the moral energies, in Hauptmann's paralysis of the spiritual! This paralysis results from the inability of the individual to reconcile his sentimental ethical ideal with social life. Death comes not as the tragic, but as the peace-restoring element. Rhythm and language, so finely adapted by Hauptmann to his poetic idea, are often mechanical and even stilted in Sudermann's drama. That sensitive touch which gave to Hauptmann's *Sunken Bell* and to his latest drama, *Poor Henry*, their chief charm was not Sudermann's to impart.

¹ I am a child abandoned of the sun
And long for home —

² I am a child of longing, ever restless.

The Three Heron Feathers proves conclusively the inability of Sudermann to develop dramatic characters. In *Magda*, the superb technique of the exposition compensates to such an extent for the lack of character delineation that only repeated reading or hearing of the play reveals its weakness. In *John the Baptist*, the poet failed signally in his attempt to depict the crucial moment in a dramatic character. For few will comprehend the great change that comes over John when he hears the word "Love" from the lips of the Nazarene zealot. This dead level, upon which, as a rule, the characters of Sudermann's dramas move, is one of the great faults of *The Three Heron Feathers*. It is the prime evidence of the pessimism of the author. Were Schopenhauer living, Sudermann's dramas would be for him a rich find substantiating his fatalistic theory of the immutability of character. Nor does Sudermann in this drama offer any compensation in the secondary action of his exposition. Until the close of the drama, the change that has taken place in Prince Witte before he appears on the scene is shrouded in mystery.

In Prince Witte, Sudermann traced the fate of a man consumed by the longing for a romantic, that is to say, a distant, unrecognized ideal. He is such a man as would let Goethe's words go unheeded : —

Warum in die Ferne schweifen?
Sieh, das Gute liegt so nah!¹

From a far-off land, where a heron is worshipped and Christ unknown, Witte brings back, at the behest of the "burial woman," three feathers plucked from the heron's plumage. He craves the perfect love of a woman who shall ever satisfy his heart's longing and ever awaken within him new longing. By the old crone he is told that if he burn the first feather, the figure of this woman shall appear to him in the fading light; if he burn the second, she shall appear to him "sleep-walking" and he be united to her; if he burn the third, she must die, though

¹ Why go roaming in the distance?
Lo! the good is close at hand!

until the third feather be burned he shall ever stretch out his arms in longing for her. The prince at once sacrifices the first feather, and in the heavens he sees a majestic, veiled figure, dimly outlined. As it passes along the horizon, he is seized with an unconquerable longing to find the real represented by this shadowy ideal, and goes forth with his faithful Lorbass to search the world in quest thereof. In his travels he comes to the court of Samland (on the coast of East Prussia), and there champions the cause of the oppressed and widowed queen. She is this ideal, but he knows it not, and, not knowing it, he is without the energy that inspires victory. Only the unscrupulous act of Lorbass saves him and the cause he has championed. And this act is justified by Lorbass, the antipode of Prince Witte, in his reply to the accusations of the chancellor, the upholder of a moral code. This reply is the apotheosis of individualism : —

Ich will dir sagen, Herr, ich selber bin das Recht!
 Ich trag's auf meines Schwertes Spitze,
 Ich trag's hier unter meiner Mütze,
 Ich schenk's im Namen meines Herrn,
 Der dafür hingab Rausch und Ruhm,
 Dem Volk als neues Heiligtum.¹

Witte marries the queen. But his longing gives him no peace. In despair he burns the second feather, and his wife enters the room "sleep-walking." Enraged he hurls at her the cruel accusation of playing the spy, and though the noble, generous words of her reply touch him for the moment and seem to make him feel the nearness of his ideal, he soon relapses into miserable brooding. Thereafter he endeavors to drown his heartache in riotous living, until a foreign invasion rouses his manhood. Witte, however, cannot tarry in the old surround-

¹ And I would tell you, sir, myself, I am the right!
 I bear it on my sword's sharp point,
 I bear it here beneath my bonnet,
 I give it in my master's name,
 Who gave for it both dream and fame,
 This land as sacred heritage. — *Die drei Reiherfedern*, Act II, 15.

ings after peace is restored. Plunged into guilt because his romantic longing remained ungratified, he must forth into the world loveless and guilt-burdened. But the good in life is in part responsible for the inability of men to recognize it and live for it. The parting words of the queen to Prince Witte make her share in his guilt : —

Ich sah dein Elend, sah die Spur
Wachsenden Grams in welken Zügen
Und dachte doch Eines, Eines nur :
Wie kann ich ihn um die Fahrt betrügen ?

* * * * *

So nahen wir uns scheidend heute
Und — tauschen lächelnd — Schuld um — Schuld.¹

Years pass. Witte's quest is fruitless. He returns to "the burial woman" amid her graves in the ocean sands. Here the queen finds him. He has despaired of life, is wearied unto death, and has but one thought — the thought of what might have been : she, his peace ! Of this peace the heron feathers deprived him. Angered at their fateful magic, he hurls the last remaining feather into the fire. Instantly the queen sinks to the ground. Death unseals her lips : —

Nun sind wir zwei genesen
Von aller Not . . .
— Bin doch . . . dein Glück . . . gewesen
Bis . . . in den . . . Tod.²

¹ I saw your sorrow ; saw the trace
Of growing grief in wearied face,
And had but the single thought in my breast :
How can I cheat him of his quest ?

* * * * *

Thus, parting we unite to-day,
Exchanging smiling — guilt with guilt.

— *Ibid.*, Act IV, 12.

² Now you and I are freed
From ev'ry need —
Have been your lifejoy's breath
E'en unto death. — *Ibid.*, Act V, 4.

And Witte? With the anguished cry: "Was't you? Was't you?" he falls upon her lifeless form and expires. And over him the "burial woman" croons her song:—

So von Schuld und Lust und Leide
 Sprach ich seine Seele rein.
 Und so soll für alle beide
 Nichts gewesen sein.¹

Is this pessimism? Yes, practical pessimism, not theoretical. German life, as Sudermann sees it, is such that the individual is sent off on a fool's errand. The pitiless hand of the unscrupulous individualist, of the stern, unyielding realist, can alone give it a new and wholesome direction. Accordingly Hans Lorbass takes upon himself the mission of redemption:—

So tret' ich nunmehr sein Erbe an:
 Dort drüben giebt's ein verlottertes Land,
 Das braucht eine rächende, rettende Hand,
 Das braucht Gewaltthat, das braucht ein Recht;—
 Zum Herrn—werde der Knecht!²

Lorbass assumes the active duties of life, which Witte had neglected.

When Goethe's Faust alights on the mountain heights from the mantle of Helena, he exclaims:—

Auf sonnbeglänzten Pfühlen herrlich hingestreckt,
 Zwar riesenhaft, ein göttergleiches Fraungebild,
 Ich seh's, Junonen ähnlich, Ledan, Helenen;
 Wie majestätisch lieblich mir's im Auge schwankt!

¹ Thus from lust and pain and sin
 Spake I pure his soul and free,
 And no thought of the "has-been"
 Shall for either be. — *Ibid.*, Act V, 5.

² So now I accept his heritage:
 Out yonder lies a degenerate land
 That calls for revenging and rescuing hand,
 That calls for the Right and that calls for the Sword:
 The thane let change to the—lord!
 — *Ibid.*, last lines of the play.

Ach, schon verrückt sich's; formlos breit und aufgetürmt
 Ruht es in Osten, fernen Eisgebirgen gleich,
 Und spiegelt blendend flüchtiger Tage grossen Sinn.¹

When Prince Witte returns from the Northland and burns the first of the three heron feathers, a similar apparition shows itself to him in the heavens: —

Von Rot umflammt, von Lichtern leise durchtränkt.²

But Faust has learned to see in the manifestations of existence the reflex of the eternal principle of life, and therefore no new longing for the immediate apprehension of the ideal is aroused in him through the vision fading away in the distance, but rather a more sympathetic appreciation of the humanly active life.

Doch mir umschwebt ein zarter lichter Nebelstreif
 Noch Brust und Stirn erheiternd, kühl und schmeichelhaft.³

Struggling amid the active duties and privileges of the phenomenal world, Faust finds his salvation. Otherwise Prince Witte. Similar opportunities as those offered to Faust present themselves to him at the court of Samland. Twice he fails to avail himself of these, and, instead of rising to a nobler manhood, which transforms dreams into action, Witte remains what he was. Death alone can free him from his vain longing.

Philosophical pessimism this is not. The ideal is in life. Neither Witte nor Lorbass shall find it. Who can? That is the unanswered question of *The Three Heron Feathers*. And

¹ On sun-illuminated pillows, beautifully reclined,
 Colossal truly, but a godlike woman-form,
 I see! The like of Juno, Leda, Helena,
 Majestically lovely, floats before my sight!
 Ah, now 'tis broken! Towering broad and formlessly,
 It rests along the East like distant icy hills,
 And shapes the grand significance of fleeting days.
 — *Faust II*, Act IV, 1. Translation by BAYARD TAYLOR.

² Flamed round with red, suffused with gentle light.
 — *Die drei Reiherfedern*, Act I, 10.

³ Yet still there clings a light and delicate band of mist
 Around my breast and brow, caressing, cheering me.
 — *Faust*, *supra*.

in putting it, Sudermann voiced, perhaps better than in all his other works, the great longing for a redeemer, for the perfected individual, which Nietzsche phrased in his rhapsodic strains, and which caused a recent critic of the modern drama, Edgar Steiger, to break forth in the prophecy: "See ye him descending over the mountains, the bringer of new values by which we may measure all our deeds? Call him what ye list! But rejoice, that he is again among us, the man of deeds for whom ye have all waited! And now go forth, ye poets, forth into the German lands, and cast about ye for those who proclaim his coming, and seek out the fighters and the conquerors! Let us create men!"

Sudermann's *Three Heron Feathers* has, however, a purely literary significance, and this is best measured by the change that suddenly dethroned naturalism from its proud seat. To a series of questions propounded in 1892 in the *Magazin für Litteratur* as to the present and future state of German poetry, Gerhardt Hauptmann couched his reply in the following diagram:—

Himmel	Erde
Ideal	Leben
Metaphysik	Physik
Abkehr	Einkehr
Prophetie	Dichtung

Zwei Lager;
wird das eine fett, wird das andere mager.¹

Naturalism was supreme. Poetry had surrendered to the impetuous assault of young men who proclaimed that its mission was exact portrayal of life, and in their proclamation emphasized "exact." It is small wonder that the number of

¹ Heaven	Earth
Ideal	Life
Metaphysics	Physics
Isolation	Communion
Prophecy	Poetry

Two camps I ween;
Grows fat the one, must grow the other lean.

would-be poets became legion. Every earnest young man felt himself called to wield his pen in the service of this new gospel. For it was in fact a gospel, and as such idealistic. In all its extravagance and seemingly categorical cleaving of existence into two incompatible camps, the naturalistic theory of art was controlled by the longing for a vision of the ideal. Men like Hauptmann, Sudermann, Kretzer, Halbe, did not really consider poetic activity in the nature of a mechanical process or a photographic reproduction. Such comparisons were made by enthusiastic, but thoughtless, partisans, by men who were not, or ever became, poets, much though they made claim to this title. The poetic naturalists did not compare their consciousness with a sensitive plate, and insist that the same set of facts leaves the same impression upon the consciousness of different men. That this was not their belief was perhaps too little emphasized, but it cannot be left out of their argument if justice is to be done to the best and most sincere champions of naturalism. They did not forget that personal temperament was bound to modify the appearance of observed facts. When they insisted that the duty of the poet compels him to reproduce the facts of life as he sees them, they felt the important part which the personal "he" plays in the reproduction. Their entire theory was vitalized for them by the hope that such reproduction would reveal through the subtle, unconscious, temperamental composition of facts the transcendental significance of these facts—in a word, the ideal. One may take the most brutally realistic writings of Sudermann, Hauptmann, or Halbe,—*e.g.* *Sodom*, *Before Sunrise*, or *Free Love*,—in each the background of idealistic effort shows through in unmistakable manner.

This often disregarded and yet ever present background of individualistic sentiment was but another phase of that longing for full expression of social individuality, which won Ludwig Fulda over into the camp of the naturalists, which forced Wildenbruch to recognize their claims, and which produced within the ranks of the naturalists exponents of extreme socialism and champions of unbounding individualism. At the time when the drama of socialism was sweeping all before it, Max

Stirner's long-forgotten book, *The Individual and His Own* (Der Einzige und sein Eigentum, 1845), was resurrected. John Henry Mackay, whose poem *Arma parata fero* had been suppressed on account of its socialistic ebullition, now wrote his poem, *The Sum of Knowledge* (Letzte Erkenntnis), closing with the stanzas :—

Sie trennen Gerechte und Sünder
und halten wechselnd Gericht,
doch sie sind ewige Kinder
und sie verstehen sich nicht.

Ich aber verstehe alle
und nenne keinen schlecht:
Ob er siege oder falle,
er ist in seinem Recht.

Ob er falle oder siege,
es kann nicht anders sein.
Ich steige, und ich erliege —
gewiss! — Doch ich bin mein.¹

It was this dual effort of naturalism : to define society and to free individuality, which produced such weird results. Both forms of existence were brought too close to the vision to be seen at once. But — and here Sudermann was right in assigning a mission to Lorbass in *The Three Heron Feathers* — the greater appreciation for the actualities of life which naturalism forced upon poetry was bound to work for good, though in its one-sidedness it could not accomplish the good it aimed at. By

¹ They part the just and the unjust
and sit in judgment by turns,
yet are they evermore children
nor understand they themselves.

But I — all men understand I
and no one call I bad :
Be victor he or vanquished,
he is what is his right.

Be vanquished he or victor,
it may not altered be.
I rise and stumble also —
'tis true — But I am mine !

rejecting in *The Three Heron Feathers* many of the naturalistic tenets (reverting, for example, to verse and rhyme), Sudermann announced his belief that naturalism had completed its mission, and that henceforth with a keener sense of the real the poet was to embody *his* ideal in images of life.

In this belief Hauptmann had preceded him. He had endeavored to live up to it in his dream poem, *Hannele* (1893), and in his fairy drama, *The Sunken Bell* (1896). Intentionally or unintentionally, Sudermann characterized the poetic life of Hauptmann with remarkable fidelity in *The Three Heron Feathers*. The difference between Hauptmann's dramas, *Before Sunrise* (1889) and *The Sunken Bell*, or *Teamster Henschel* (1898) and *Poor Henry* (1902), is the difference between Lorbass and Prince Witte, and the fact that the same poet could vacillate between two art views apparently so discrepant proves how idealistic was the purpose of naturalism.

Hauptmann's first poetic publication, *Promethidenlos* (1885), foretold his future. It may be likened to a card catalogue of his later poetic activity with the cards thrown together in wild confusion. To Hauptmann, hardly twenty-three years of age, the mission of the poet seemed a Promethean task, his lot Promethean sorrow. In every line of this intensely subjective epic is writ passionate grief at the misery of social life, and Hauptmann well epitomized his work when he wrote in a dedication copy the lines:—

Wohl möglich, dass es wirr Dir scheint,
ich will es nicht verneinen.
Doch ist das Leid, das es beweint,
wohl wert, darum zu weinen.
Und wenn Du weinst, wie ich geweint,
so wahr und echt, dann Bruder, scheint
belohnt vollauf mein Dichten.
Auf Lob und Tadel, falsch und wahr,
ihr Freunde, will ich ganz und gar
verzichten.¹

¹ 'Tis possible it seems confused,
gainsay you I would not.

To change this social misery became his great purpose. Can a poet contribute to this end? The epic answers, No! Selin, its hero, starts to preach a new social religion which shall not shut out the fallen, and he is ridiculed by men. From the splendors of Italian landscape, the sight of the poor and hungry drives him to the isle of Hopelessness, whence he would proclaim to the world the depravity of society in all its horrible nakedness. Again life calls him back, for he cannot relinquish all hope, and again it forces him to despair. His lyre is hurled into the sea, whence the veiled goddess of poetry carries it to the skies.

When Hauptmann wrote *Promethidenlos*, he imagined that he, too, had bidden an eternal farewell to poetry. Nothing that can be said or written—so he thought then—is of the least consequence. Amid the squalor of social depravity words are useless. For a time he devoted himself to the study of sociology.

Hauptmann's social sympathy was not affected nor in any way artificially exaggerated. It was so deep, so true, so all controlling, that it ranged into the mystical. He cared less for the conduct of men, their moral status, than he did for their feeling, their spiritual status. Hours upon hours he spent in the company of a humble track-walker, where the railroad ran through the sighing pine forests of Brandenburg, listening to the story of his life and sounding with loving appreciation its spiritual depths and shallows. And when he retold this story in *Flagman Thiele* (1887), he wrote as only a man can write who has communed with the hopes and the sorrows of the lowly.

The woe, however, it bewails
is well worth wailing over.
And when you weep, as I have wept,
tears hot and true, then, brother, seems
my poem well rewarded.
Rebuke and praise, though true, though false,
my friends, I will forevermore
relinquish.

Two years later (1889) Hauptmann's first drama, *Before Sunrise*, was performed at Berlin. It was the product of sociological theories and pessimistic sentiment. It endeavored to find the only hope of social redemption in complete subordination of the individual to certain so-called scientific laws of social betterment. The individualistic principle was to give way to the socialistic. No more living, working, or striving for self! The struggle for existence must cease. No more promiscuous taking in marriage under the impulse of love, but a scientific mating for the breeding of human beings! The heritage of the fathers shall not pollute the life of the children, for there shall be no children born of depraved men and women. Nor shall that have value which pleasures the individual, unless first of all it have a direct bearing on the good of all, and whatever science has shown to work harm to a man, that shall the law forbid that man to do. It is unnecessary to run through the decalogue of German social democracy which Hauptmann believed himself sent to proclaim like a new Moses. Over his frightful picture of social depravity are written in lurid letters the words, If thou break one of these commandments, thou shalt surely die!

Hauptmann was writing from the isle of Hopelessness. And yet he called his tragedy *Before Sunrise*, and not *Before Sunset*. He looked for the daybreak of a new social life, as he hoped for the dawn of a new poetry. Since the publication of *Before Sunrise* nearly every year brought a new drama, sometimes two. *The Festival of Peace, Lonely People, The Weavers, Professor Crampton, The Beaver Coat, Hannele, Florian Geyer, The Sunken Bell, Teamster Henschel, Schluck and Jau, Michael Kramer, The Red Cock, Poor Henry*—thirteen dramas in twelve years! Better evidence of the fever burning in his veins could hardly be found, and sadly true of Hauptmann—still true though *Poor Henry* be proclaimed as the consummation of his poetic quest—are the words of Henry in *The Sunken Bell*, once before quoted in part:—

Ich bin der Sonne ausgesetztes Kind,
das heim verlangt; und hilflos ganz und gar,

ein Häuflein Jammer, grein ich nach der Mutter,
die ihren goldnen Arm sehnsüchtig streckt
und nie mich doch erlangt.¹

Hauptmann is a Prince Witte, essaying at intervals the part of Lorbass ; but even so, dreamer and mystic.

The early life of Hauptmann, which plays an important part in many of his dramas, *e.g.* in *The Weavers*, *Professor Crampton*, *Teamster Henschel*, stamped him with the sign of mysticism, and mysticism lurks in his deep-set eyes with their far-off look. Nothing but sheer will-power, backed by an all-consuming desire to elevate society, could have forced this man into the naturalistic portrayals of life he so often gave. Turn, therefore, to whatever drama we please, Hauptmann, the poet dealing with spiritual values, is easily detected. Morality is always of secondary, sometimes of no, consideration at all. What he is ever striving to find in his study of the phenomenal is the transcendental, the spiritual quintessence of human being. Even the appalling moral depravity of *Before Sunrise* fades into insignificance as he contemplates the spiritual atrophy of the people. To Lot, the moral reformer, Hauptmann could not give a soul. Helen, the girl whom the morality of Lot discards, has a soul. We care little how any of these people act ; we do care how they feel. From first to last, Hauptmann found his theme, not in the struggle of man to live up to his moral principles, but in the struggle of man to enlarge his spiritual horizon. Had Hauptmann dramatized the story of Sudermann's *Magda*, the secondary action of this drama would have become of prime importance, and we should have seen Magda struggling for self-redemption, instead of the regenerate Magda struggling to maintain herself.

There is not a drama of Hauptmann that does not move in these realms of the transcendental. Empiric character,

¹ I am a child abandoned of the sun
and long for home ; and helpless, wholly helpless,
a heap of woe, for her I wall, my mother,
who stretches out her golden arms in longing,
yet never reaches me ! — *Die versunkene Glocke*, Act V.

whether of the individual or of society, always suggests to Hauptmann the deeper problems of intelligible character. Conduct points him to the effort of the soul awakening from its dream state into the full consciousness of its eternal sublimity.

When Hauptmann puts us face to face with the miserable discord wrought in family life by the idiosyncracies of its members, he opens the heavens over the sombre scenes of *The Festival of Peace* and lets the message of "Peace on earth, good will to men!" symbolize the secret impulse actuating men. When he dwells on the disintegration of modern society through modern imperatives, he discloses the heartache of his *Lonely People* which no moral maxims can assuage. When he recalls the scenes attending the revolt of the Silesian weavers, it is not the threefold curse of Heine's poem that trembles on his lips, but an agonized cry over souls starved to death by the weary toil for a crust to feed the body. His own grandfather had been one of those rioting weavers of 1844, and from his mouth he knew the misery of their lives. Like a flaming question mark, Hauptmann's *Weavers* burns its way into the consciousness of modern society. Shall such things be? Shall a whole community perish because social ethics disregard the great law of spiritual being—love? And whether he takes up in *Professor Crampton* the struggle between artist and life, or ridicules the moral standards of bureaucracy in *The Beaver Coat*, or, in a painstaking study of the last days of chivalry, traces in *Florian Geyer* the moral revolt against inhuman treatment of the peasantry—always he is trying to give expression to that unutterable compassion which made him see the unit of existence in the mass rather than in the individual, and the only redemption of the latter in the awakening of the social soul.

And this deep compassion for social waywardness called him back from his isle of Hopelessness. Without it, *Hannele* and *The Sunken Bell* are inexplicable. What is all material misery if but the soul retain its elasticity? A passing nightmare! The true reality is the great ideal which the soul harbors.

In *Hannele* the mysticism of Hauptmann drew apart the veil

that hangs between the world of sense and the world of spirit. Into the squalid almshouse of a Silesian village a child is brought. A young schoolmaster has rescued her for a brief moment from death. Frenzied terror of a drunken father had driven her into the icy waters of a mill-pond. In the fevered mind of the dying girl heaven is opened. The almshouse is changed to the beauteous fields of elysium, and its inmates are transfigured into angelic forms. The cold breath of the angel of death touches her brow, but death has no terror in the presence of her dear, sweet mother, dead these many years. In a crystal coffin the child is laid. Her one loving friend, the young schoolmaster, reappears as the Saviour of Mankind, and bending low kisses her soul free from all trammels of the earth. The vision vanishes. The squalid almshouse and its squalid inmates are once more what they were. But the little one has passed into the beyond, into the great reality.

And this dream poem, which parted the mystic veil with such bold and reverent hand, was conceived and written by the author of *Before Sunrise!* It was followed in *The Sunken Bell* by a confession of poetic failure. The social reality will not respond to individual ideality.

We get a suggestion of the Hebbelian drama of civilization in this fairy drama of Hauptmann. A new era is about to dawn and its coming is announced by a vague longing that troubles the individual. The modern man is living in the twilight that precedes the sunrise. The age of instinctive collectivism has passed; that of conscious collectivism has not yet arrived. Since Luther civilization has been in a transition period. The drama plays in the sixteenth century, but the atmosphere is modern and accords with the thought of the poet.

Henry has cast a new bell for a chapel in the mountains. The dray, on which it is dragged to the chapel, meets with a mishap, and the bell is precipitated into a mountain lake. Henry, who endeavors to save his work, is hurled over a steep slope. Animal nature, it appears, has revolted against the doctrine which the bell was to proclaim; the mediæval doctrine of the crucifixion of the flesh is unnatural. Sorely wounded

and in despair at his loss, the bell-caster creeps to a hut near by. Here he is found by Rautendelein, the personification of instinctive living. She is a being without moral sense.

Over Henry this child exerts a strange fascination. Whence she has sprung, no one can tell. The mountain folks have known her as a mute berry-vender. She lives with an old crone, Wittichen, famed as a witch, who found the babe in the forest being suckled by a hind. In Rautendelein Hauptmann created a new Undine with masterly hand. She is neither human nor unhuman. Associating with fairies, elves, sprites, and the various forms assigned by popular superstition to nature life, she is not one of them. She is not a nixie, like Undine, seeking a human soul, for she has a soul. Neither is she a human being; for though human in form, her soul life is merely potential. It has not been aroused to the consciousness of its existence. On the border land of the human and the merely natural she stands, like humanity in its first childhood, awaiting the touch that shall gently awaken her soul to conscious life or that shall rudely thrust it back into the night of unconsciousness. And so she is drawn irresistibly to the young artist, as he to her.

Rautendelein is the poet's symbol of the much lauded freedom of natural instincts. But this freedom keeps the soul life of the individual in abeyance. On the other hand, civilization—as Hauptmann conceives it—has been merely a moral association. In it the soul has awakened, but has not come to its own. For the conventions of society are the outgrowth of a mutuality of material interests, and the moral law, as the expression of this mutuality, cannot satisfy the spiritual longing of humanity. The soul demands spiritual association. Natural man seeking to free his soul from the bondage of the unconscious, and moral man craving deliverance from the conventional limitations of his soul life—both meet in maiden and artist.

From the hut where Rautendelein finds him, Henry is carried back to the village and his family. Rautendelein follows, and Henry is restored to consciousness as she enters the cot-

tage. The draught she brews gives him back to life. But his eyes have been opened to the greater possibilities of existence. He cannot tarry among men whose code of morals stunts the soul. He cannot be satisfied with the love of wife and children to whom his vague talk of a new social ideal seems delirious raving. High up in the mountains he builds his forge, Rautendelein at his side. At her bidding elves and fairies, sprites and dwarfs labor in his behalf. A new set of chimes he would create, that shall peal forth to the world a new ideal. His words to the vicar, who comes to urge his return to home and society, sum up his — and also Hauptmann's — mystic and feverish longing: —

Und nun erklingt mein Wunderglockenspiel
in süßen, brünstig süßen Lockelauten,
dass jede Brust erschluchzt von weher Lust:
es singt ein Lied, verloren und vergessen,
ein Heimatlied, ein Kinderliebeslied,
aus Märchenbrunnentiefen aufgeschöpft,
gekannt von jedem, dennoch unerhört.
Und wie es anhebt, heimlich, zehrend-bang,
bald Nachtigallenschmerz, bald Taubenlachen —
da bricht das Eis in jeder Menschenbrust,
und Hass und Groll und Wut und Qual und Pein
zerschmilzt in heissen, heissen, heissen Tränen.

So aber treten alle wir an's Kreuz
und, noch in Tränen, jubeln wir hinan,
wo endlich, durch der Sonne Kraft erlöst,
der tote Heiland seine Glieder regt
und strahlend, lachend, ew'ger Jugend voll,
ein Jüngling, in den Maien niedersteigt.¹

¹ And now — my wondrous chime of bells peals forth
in sweetest, fervent-sweetest, luring notes,
and ev'ry bosom heaves with grieving bliss:
it sings a song, long lost and long forgotten,
a song of home, a song of childhood's love,
from deepest wonderfable's bourn collected,
known unto all and yet unheard by any.
And as it swells in witching, sweet foreboding,
now wail of nightingale, now pigeon-cooing,

Not Christ dead, enthroned afar off in the skies ; not Christ suffering and the symbol of resignation ; not Christ condemning the earth and what is of the earth earthy ; but Christ living, Christ the ever present principle of love, Christ the redeemer of the earthy, the transformer of suffering into joy, and of a world distraught into a world all light and sweet — this Christ, the incarnation of social ethics, Hauptmann's Henry would make real.

But how has he attempted it? Not in the world, as a member of human society, but by fleeing from the world, a mystical recluse, forgetful of his moral obligations. Art cannot be true to its mission under such circumstances. And in letting Henry fail, Hauptmann recognized the failure of his own artistic efforts. Through the admonition of the vicar and the subsequent attempt of the villagers to separate Henry from Rautendelein, a disturbing element has entered his hermit life. The world calls him back. Up the mountain side clamber his two children, a vision of his troubled fancy, and between them they carry a crucifix with "mother's tears." To his question, "Where is mother?" comes the pathetic reply, "With the water-lilies." At that moment Henry hears the old bell tolled in its watery resting-place by the dead hand of his wife. Fiercely he thrusts away the anxious, pleading Rautendelein, and rushes wildly down the mountain side, down again into human life. With that his aspirations are ruined, and darkness envelops the soul of Rautendelein. Him the world casts back broken and crushed, the semblance of a man ; her the unconscious life of nature claims as its own.

in every human breast the ice is broken,
and hate and spite and rage and woe and sorrow
melt into burning, burning, burning tears.

And then, we all, yes all, step to the cross
and, still in tears, lift up our joyful shout
to where, by sunny power freed, at last
the lifeless Saviour stirs and moves his limbs,
and radiant, smiling, youth's eternal emblem,
himself a youth, descends into the May.

— *Die versunkene Glocke*, Act III.

What might have been, what still may be, when the time is ripe, — that is the last sad and yet hopeful plaint of the drama. It is night. Henry totters back to the hut where he first met Rautendelein, who is now the bride of the water sprite. His pleading voice reaches her, and, coming forth from the well, she hands him the last of the three cups poured out for him by Wittichen, the old crone, two of which he had already drained. Darkness enshrouds him. But as he sinks back dying, Rautendelein crouches at his side, encircles his knees with rapturous joy, and as she presses her lips to his the dawn begins to break.

Hoch oben : Sonnenglockenklang !

Die Sonne . . . Sonne kommt ! — die Nacht ist lang.¹

What shall we say of this tale of human woe, sung in language of such insinuating, ravishing beauty that in the wide range of modern German literature its equal can be found only in the writings of Nietzsche ? On the American stage, robbed in its English rendering of one of its greatest charms, the drama met with rather cool welcome. In Germany it was played night after night to houses packed to the doors and listening in rapt attention. As a book drama it passed through its fiftieth edition before the century closed. The beauty of the language in the original does not wholly account for this different attitude of two peoples toward the same poem. Nor is it altogether accounted for by the inability of an American audience to appreciate the *naïveté* of fairy scenes and fairy doings. We simply cannot sympathize with Henry's disregard of all human ties in his desire to attain the ideal. To us his striving seems mystical and morbid, not to say ridiculous. And when a theme tragically conceived makes this impression, there is nothing more to be said. But for Germans it was what Hauptmann intended it should be. Where the moral nature of man is either shut in by conventions or kept in eternal infancy through aristocratic prejudices, his spiritual being loses touch with the

¹ Aloft : the sun peals forth melodious song !

The sun . . . the sun will rise ! The night is long !

— *Die versunkene Glocke*, Act V. Last words of Henry.

empiric and hugs to its bosom the transcendental as the only reality that it can control. And this tendency in German life to seek refuge in the realms of the world of non-sense explains the popularity which Hauptmann's fairy drama attained, as it explains also his poetic striving. But whether our own strong grip on empiric life is not too often a frantic clutch, and the spiritual content of life too little real is a question we have good cause to ponder.

Surprise has been expressed at the return of Hauptmann to more pronounced naturalism in *Teamster Henschel*. Yet *The Sunken Bell* would seem to imply some such return to the actualities of existence. Hauptmann's morbidly psychological study, *Teamster Henschel*, was not wholly unlooked for by those who were familiar with his previous works. *Hannele* contrasted spiritual consciousness with moral consciousness. And Henry in *The Sunken Bell* fails because he attempts what his creator, Hauptmann, attempted in *Hannele*. How then shall a poet find his quest rewarded? Only by seeking the spiritual mirrored in the moral. Hauptmann is far from having such a vision in *Teamster Henschel*; still he is to be credited with the effort to obtain it. Again, he could only see the misery of life. With the mortal agony of a man over a broken promise to a dying wife, the alienist may be concerned, not the poet. In constantly narrowing circles the thoughts of Teamster Henschel turn about the one tense feeling of a wrong committed when he married again in violation of his promise. The infidelity of his second wife appears to him like the judgment of God, and his diseased imagination plays riot with his reason. At night the figure of his dead wife lies down with him; it rises with him in the morning; it is beside him indoors and outdoors, until, unable to endure the torture, he puts an end to his life. There is no trace of dialectical reasoning in this simple Silesian teamster. He stands facing existence without the ability to apply his reason to anything but the humdrum affairs of daily life. Once forced beyond the bounds of these, reason gives way, and he is gradually led into a pessimistic fatalism from which there is no

escape. But to create by transforming spiritual life into moral action is the law of individual existence, and men, as Hauptmann sees them, are in the world for this purpose.

In these days when Americans are turning with peculiar recognition to Emerson as the prophet of democratic individualism, it is perhaps not out of place to note that in *Teamster Henschel* Hauptmann sought to press home the truth which Emerson once stated as the law of social well-being, "Society can never prosper, but must always be bankrupt, until every man does that which he was created to do." So far as it is possible to redeem a drama which offers as its first scene the sick chamber of a woman dying of puerperal fever and follows this with scenes equally revolting to our æsthetic sense, — the seeking for this truth is the redeeming feature of *Teamster Henschel*.

For Hauptmann, the poet, it remained a seeking. *Schluck and Jau*, a comedy that is not a comedy, was a dramatic failure. The metaphysics of Calderon's *Life is a Dream*, and of Grillparzer's *A Dream is Life*, and of Hauptmann's own dream poem *Hannele*, are curiously mingled in this play. It is a dream within a life and life within a dream. A besotten drunkard picked up at the wayside by a party of royal roisterers, carried into the castle, awakened and treated with mock deference, finally convinced of his kingship, then drugged and cast back into his former degradation to fit together as best he may the pieces of his dual life — that is the form in which Hauptmann clothes the problem of life: —

Der Mensch, das Tier, das seine Träume deutet,
verliert's den Schlüssel seiner Traumwelt,
so steht es nackt in Weltenraumes Frost
vor seiner eignen Thür und leidet Pein.¹

¹ If man or beast attempts to read his dreams,
when once his dream-life's key is lost,
then naked, shriv'ring in the world of space,
he stands before his door and suffers pain.

— *Schluck und Jau*, Scene V (*Der Schlosshof*).

Schluck and Jau was the last drama written by Hauptmann in the nineteenth century. Two years later, after delving once more in the mire of society (*Michael Kramer* and *The Red Cock*), Hauptmann wrote *Poor Henry*. This last drama must at least be mentioned here as indicating a new effort on the part of Hauptmann to escape from the dreary desert into which his morbid compassion for the slums of society drove him. Whether *Poor Henry* shall prove that a poetic genius of rare power, for that Hauptmann is, has finally freed itself of morbid brooding, it is yet too early to assert. If the self-restraint necessarily imposed upon the poet in dramatizing the epic of that gentle poet of the days of chivalry, Hartmann von Aue, shall have been a wholesome discipline, then it may still be the privilege of Hauptmann to refute the prophecy of the "burial woman" in Sudermann's *Three Heron Feathers*:—

No one touches me,
Lest himself and hopes
Hurt and harmed be.

But with all its rare beauty, *Poor Henry* seems to carry the sting of that fatal longing which robs life of beauty and the power of self-redemption. One cannot but feel that the love which Hauptmann preaches in this last work is as mystically useless and devoid of regenerative energy as his own inordinate partiality for the weak, downtrodden, and weary. And therefore, even now, one is tempted to quote to Hauptmann the words of the old Cape Cod parson which Emerson found so applicable to the sordid ethics of social life, "No, this land does not want a prayer; this land wants manure." Hauptmann's *Poor Henry* is a prayer for deliverance, not an active, generous, wholesome enriching of the soil.

The two extremes which, to a greater or less degree, disrupt Hauptmann's poetry are not avoided in *Poor Henry*. A harmonious vision is not substituted for that dual conception of existence which he formulated at a time when naturalism seemed to him the sum of poetry. Unfortunately his imagination seems incapable of freeing itself. It deals always with two distinct realities, and, try as he may, he continually fails

to unite both into a perfect whole. Hauptmann's appreciative faculties for sweet and wholesome moral realities seem palsied. With signal sympathy he perceives degenerate moral forms and calls these life. Then to the depth of his own troubled soul he flees for refuge, for a glimpse of "heaven" which "earth" denies him. Better, though it was unwittingly, no poet ever characterized his work than Hauptmann in that diagram of 1892. In all he wrote two "camps" are arrayed against each other, and the alternate supremacy of the one over the other deprived his writings of poetic beauty. "Grows fat the one, must grow the other lean!"—that line best tells the story of his poetic struggle. Until Hauptmann shall escape from the fatal habit of seeing the spiritual in contrast to the moral, heaven in contrast to earth,—there seems little hope that his imagination will conceive forms of satisfying beauty.

From these poets of the last two decades, with their theoretical democracy and their practical aristocracy, one turns with a certain pardonable relief to a poet of sterling democratic sympathies and undimmed democratic vision,—Ludwig Anzengruber. In one of his letters to Petri Rosegger occurs the following noble passage:—

"When we who through our own strength have struggled upward above the mass, out of the people from whose bosom, methinks, we yet drew the strength of all our feeling and thinking, when we, I say, look back upon the steep path up which we have climbed so wearily into the air of freedom, back upon the thousands remaining behind, then a feeling of sadness comes over us, for we—we know all too well that in all these hearts there slumbers, though it be unconscious, the same craving for light and freedom, the same desire to climb higher, and the same strength unwieldy though it be. And whenever at a bend of the path we catch a glimpse of the valley, then, true to our heart's promptings, we call down in joyful shout: Come up! yonder lies the path! or with tears in our eyes we beckon—how often misunderstood! I, too, have feared to be misunderstood, but behold—suddenly the pathway from the valley up to me is alive with moving forms, I find myself understood, overtaken, surrounded, and there I stand amid the people coddled like a child or a fool—who you know tell the truth. God keep the people thus; we will gladly be children and remain its fools."

Anzengruber was an Austrian, a child of Vienna. As such he had a distinct advantage over his North German contemporaries, an advantage comparable to that enjoyed by Raimund over Chamisso or Platen. Anzengruber was a second Raimund in all but the quality of his ambition. The times of Metternich were past, and though the limitations and restrictions of a lowly birth and meagre education made the struggle of Anzengruber hard and success tardy, yet to remain a representative leader of the common people was far easier for Anzengruber than it was for Raimund. The revolution of 1848 had done much to weaken the prejudices of birth and culture. Anzengruber had no false ambition to enter a higher class of society or write for a separate class of men. That is the solid foundation of his poetry. He knew no classes, no categories of noble and peasant, rich and poor, cultured and uncultured. But he never deceived himself with the dream of social equality. His dramas and novels always measured individual rights by individual worth. In so far as social ethics, conventional prejudices, or the laws of the land disregarded this principle, in so far he never hesitated to attack them, and in so far he recognized traditional class distinctions, but only as negative forms. Yet so strong and vigorous was his faith in the common people, and so completely did he see in them the real stuff of which society is formed, that the problems which engaged the attention of Wildenbruch, Sudermann, and Hauptmann had for him a distinctly different poetic significance. Himself a self-made man of the people, he believed the people capable of the same upward swing and secretly impelled by the same ethical purpose as himself—greater personal worth.

Anzengruber did not see society in its extremes. The ideal and the real did not present themselves to his poetic, nor indeed to his human, gaze in conflict with each other. In his writings we look in vain for the idealistic dreamer and unscrupulous realist of Wildenbruch, or the moral iconoclast and hyperorthodox moralist of Sudermann, or the mystic reformer and spiritual degenerate of Hauptmann. Not what ought to be, but what would be, constituted the con-

tent of his vision. He always saw the ideal in the real, not in contrast to the real. His was a wholesome optimism. To the dark shadows of life his eyes were not closed, nor did his pen hesitate to reproduce them, but always they were shadows, shadows cast by the real in the light of the ideal. Daylight is everywhere in all he wrote, and his pen pictures of life are so supremely real because the dark side of life is relegated to its proper artistic sphere. In the murky darkness of the naturalistic realms of Sudermann and Hauptmann shadows are unknown. The sun is forever a-coming, the night is always with us.

Anzengruber was provincial, provincial in the best sense. He was a typical Viennese, with that pride of country which, with all its naïveness, was not vainglorious. Born and reared in the Austrian capital, he found there a social compactness, a certain *cameraderie* in burgher life, of which few large cities can boast. Nor did he, like Sudermann and Hauptmann, suffer the consequences of a break with the traditions of early youth. He grew to manhood in a large city, moreover in surroundings of city life which partook of the wholesome cheer of country folk. Sudermann and Hauptmann came from country simplicity into the dizzy whirl of cosmopolitan life, and the immorality and spiritual degeneracy of this life was thereby distorted to undue dimensions.

Alone the language that Anzengruber speaks shows him in marked contrast to German naturalists. His characters express themselves in speech, not in ejaculations. They are always human beings capable of thought and of putting thought into language. He disdained painful imitation of the incoherent dialogue of daily life, which in drama or novel always conveys the impression of undeveloped or stunted mentality. The dialect of his writings is not a studied copy of any particular Austrian dialect or of the forms of speech employed in actual life by the people of whom he writes. Anzengruber was not a dialect poet like Reuter or Groth. He chose the simpler forms of society, not because this lowlier life bounded his horizon or stood in contrast to higher forms of society, but because—to

quote his own words — “in the restricted sphere of rural activity character is freer to follow its natural and instinctive bent, the passions of men are less restrained or only crudely dissimulated, and therefore more readily understood.”

His audience included peasants and artisans of Austria, but did not exclude men and women in other walks of life. He wrote for all Austria, and he wrote for all Germany. Like Keller he conceived national literature as reaching beyond the confines of political boundaries. His pictures of village life were, therefore, conscious symbols of human fate, not unconscious symbols like those of Claus Groth. Nor did he, after the manner of Fritz Reuter, express in terms of provincial life problems that he had first encountered beyond the narrower domain of a particular district, nor, after the manner of Auerbach's *Village Tales of the Black Forest*, transfuse his rural scenes with artificial vitality. His dramas and novels are the triumph of realism in form and content. None of his characters speak pure dialect; they do speak dialectically or, as Anzengruber put it, in “semi-dialect.” This “semi-dialect” was artistic, not artificial. At the moment of creative activity, Anzengruber heard his characters converse in forms of speech spontaneously modified by the general character of their everyday thought and language. Instead of reproducing dialectical peculiarities, he gave in language the impression conveyed by these peculiarities. Therefore, Anzengruber is far more convincing than Hauptmann. When his men and women speak, they stand before us as fellow-creatures whose joys and sorrows, hopes and failures, seem like our own. They are not beings of an under world whose lot we may pity, but at once distinguish from our own.

And this democracy — if the word be permitted — of linguistic form is equalled by that of poetic form. Indeed, the two are inseparable. Anzengruber disproved the gloomy prophecy of Sudermann's *Three Heron Feathers* and Hauptmann's *Sunken Bell*. Neither Witte nor Henry see the ideal in life until it is too late. Witte's three feathers, Henry's three draughts — Anzengruber knew no such distinctions. To search

reality for a preconceived ideal like Witte, or to construct an ideal for an incongruous reality like Henry, was never the artistic travail of Anzengruber.

For nearly ten years he was a member of a travelling troupe of actors, and had ample opportunity to study the provincial life of Austria, ample cause also to grow pessimistic under personal disappointments. The first he did, the second he avoided. Anzengruber was thirty years old before he found opportunity to cultivate his poetic inclination. Within a year (1870) his first drama, *The Vicar of Kirchfeld*, was played in Vienna. When he died in 1889, fifty years of age, he had enriched German literature by a number of dramas, two of which, *The Cross Signers* (Kreuzelschreiber) and *The Peasant Forsworn* (Meineidbauer), may justly rank as the strongest of modern realism. He had also, in addition to a not inconsiderable series of village stories, written two of the most powerful novels to be found in German fiction — *The Badge of Infamy* (Der Schandfleck) and *The Sternstein Farm* (Sternsteinhof). He had won his way to the hearts of his Austrian countrymen, high and low ; had seen his long-cherished wish fulfilled for a popular theatre, where the common people should not be fed with cant and nonsense and vituperation, but where the rich wealth of human thought, "the sublime ideas of human enlightenment should circulate in small coin" among those who hungered and thirsted for a share of these treasures. He had also found a warm welcome beyond his political fatherland and made good his claim that in literature language and not government determines nationality. And he had achieved these results not by sensationalism, not by startling innovations, not by brilliant flashes of his imagination, not by morbid pictures of human depravity, not by captivating, mystical phraseology, not by an appeal to prejudices of class or nationality, — but by his sturdy, sympathetic faith in human nature, by his unflinching democracy. Because he believed in himself, he believed also in the common people from whom he sprang ; and because he believed in its aspiring humanity, he could see the nobility of this humanity beneath its cloak of prejudice, superstition,

hypocrisy, religious cant, and venality. He tore the cloak off, and in doing so he revealed to his people their true being.

When we encounter the problems of German life in the works of Anzengruber, they are pregnant with health and vigor. We hardly recognize in them the same problems that engaged Wildenbruch, Sudermann, and Hauptmann. And yet they are the same. Anzengruber's *Cross Signers* has the same politico-ecclesiastical background as Wildenbruch's *Henry* — the concordat with the church of Rome. But Anzengruber found his theme in the secret instinct for spiritual freedom which impels even these ignorant peasants to sign a petition in favor of their beloved pastor. And he could picture the absurd and ludicrous consequences with such sterling humor because he knew that this instinct would be victorious when education came to its aid.

None of the North German contemporaries of Anzengruber created a character comparable to Steinklopferhanns in *The Cross Signers*. One cannot conceive any of Hauptmann's, Sudermann's, or Halbe's peasants uttering the words which sound so natural from the lips of Steinklopferhanns when he tells the story of the awakening of his soul after a severe illness: "Nothing can harm you! Even the greatest torment does not count when it is over! Though you were lying six feet deep under yonder sod, or though you were to see thousand times over all that stretches out before your gaze, nothing can harm you! Then for the first time in my life I was happy, and have been happy ever since, and I would have no one sad and spoiling my happy world!"

This great joy of life in the consciousness of its divinity, Anzengruber recognized as the inalienable possession of humanity. The poison was thereby drawn from the sting of woe and sorrow, and when he laid bare the evils and sufferings of his day, morbid pessimism had no share in his act. The imagination of Anzengruber never took mystical flight into the unknown. Heaven and earth were never contrasting phases of existence. Do your duty on earth, heaven will take care of itself! And when he chose Steinklopferhanns as the type of sturdy peasant

life, he chose the best means of expressing what he, as a poet, conceived to be the motives secretly actuating the peasantry.

Among *The Tales of Steinklopferhanns* is one entitled *The Story of the Old Heavens*. As one reads this tale, one cannot help contrasting Anzengruber with Hauptmann, even when that author is at his best, as in *Hannele*. It would be difficult to find a more kindly raillery at the foolishness of men who construct for themselves a heavenly bliss than this naïve legend, told by Steinklopferhanns of the Lord's visit to the various heavenly paradises of the human imagination. One by one he condemns them. "Then He looked in upon our heaven where the blessed lie around on the clouds and sing hallelujah to the music of the harp. Says He, That's a trifle more respectable (than the heaven of the Turks), but wearisome; no Christian soul can put up with that forever." After inspecting the heaven of the peasants, where the brooks run with beer and dumplings fall into open mouths, the Lord speaks as follows to St. Michael: "Do you call those heavens? When folks get a little more reasonable down yonder, no soul will want to get into any of these. They're all the work of human beings and never eternal!" And with that the Lord closes up all the heavens, and continues: "Thus shall it be, humanity shall learn to get along without a heaven. Let every one first do his duty honestly on earth before he queries what is to follow and what is to become of him! And whoso has lived honestly and faithfully on earth, he need not fear my judgment nor come a-begging for my reward; he will close his eyes in trustful confidence that whatever my decision, I, the All-father, know what is good and fitting for my children."

In nearly all of Anzengruber's writings this refreshing sprightliness carries us safely beyond sombre hopelessness. Anzengruber never separates the consciousness of sin from the consciousness of righteousness. Good and evil walk ever hand in hand with each other through life, as sadness cannot divorce itself from joy. Only because human beings are instinctively joyous can sadness enter life, and evil is conceivable only because humanity is instinctively righteous. Therefore one

of the few tragedies that Anzengruber wrote, *The Fourth Commandment*, has, despite its dreary revelation of social degeneracy in a great city, a buoyant uplift which is nowhere to be found in similar dramas of German naturalists. The social atmosphere is not miasmatic, as in Hauptmann's *Before Sunrise* or Sudermann's *Sodom*. Society is not totally depraved and in need of regeneration. Anzengruber felt that the sense of the reciprocal nature of duty required quickening. Conventional standards too often blind men to the ethical principle upon which they were originally based, but for all that the ethical principle is not dead. All it requires in order to be effective is a forcible restatement. The commandment, "Honor father and mother," had in German life led to autocratic parental rule. That it imposed a duty upon parents as well as upon children was all too frequently overlooked. Young Martin goes from bad to worse under the influence of parental sloth and is finally convicted of murder. To the urgent request of a former friend, now clergyman, that he become reconciled to his parents, he replies: "My dear Edward, it is easy for you to demand this, for you do not know that for many it is the greatest misfortune to be reared by their parents. When you teach your school children to honor father and mother, don't forget to tell their parents from the chancel that they shall act accordingly."

Anzengruber drew no "dead-line" between individual morality and social morality. For him the moral code was not the ruthless juggernaut of Sudermann's *Cat's Bridge* or of the same writer's *Magda*. Society may be unconscious of the moral ideas that actuate its members, but it is not unresponsive to the manifestations of moral individuality even when these controvert the letter of the code. Helen in *The Sternstein Farm* is the prototype of *Magda*. Apparently her ambition is purely selfish. She, the despised waif of the village, determines to count for something in life. Her ambition is gratified, she becomes the wife of the wealthiest farmer of the region, and is respected by all, not because of her wealth, but because she recognizes the responsibilities of her position, and in fulfilling

these responsibilities never sacrifices her individuality nor disregards the claims that society has on the individual. "She knew" — thus Anzengruber concludes his novel — "that she was of some account and that her death would be felt as a loss. From the first moment when this consciousness began to stir in her, it was nothing but vanity that impelled her to be of some account and to omit nothing that would make her loss more acutely felt. And thus she who ever and always lived for herself alone wielded a greater and more beneficial influence than many another who lives a life of self-denial for a single being or for the few that stand nearest to him. For alone through this exclusiveness he often hardens himself toward all who are more remote, until he becomes unjust. Then after giving to the world an example of duty done, so narrow in its scope that it seems almost selfish, he departs from the scene of his activity and his life has signified nothing to the world."

Helen of *The Sternstein Farm* was not an ideal figure. Anzengruber reckoned with the selfish impulses of individual striving. But the magnificent truth of the uplifting of society through the individual, and of the reciprocal uplifting of the individual through society, each purifying and glorifying the other — where shall we find it brought home to us with greater force? Anzengruber applied to life the doctrine of democracy, and he found that life stood the test. Personal worth through social inspiration, personal independence for social ends — such ideals it will recognize.

In this abiding conviction he wrote his novel, *The Badge of Shame*. The illegitimate daughter of a farmer's wife — the Badge of Shame, as her supposed father calls her — is in time acknowledged at her true worth, because she has borne herself nobly in the struggle which the sin of her mother imposed upon her. Fighting her own battle she grows to womanhood, and because she is actuated by the same high sense of personal purity which condemns her as the fruit of impure relations, she rises above social condemnation. Her individual morality interprets the spirit of the code. It interprets also the spirit of filial love. For it is she who takes into her new

home the old man, whom his real children despise because he would not disown the fruit of the error of his wife. The badge of shame has become in his eyes and the eyes of others the badge of honor, the pearl without price. After reading Anzengruber's novel, one comes away from a performance of Halbe's *Youth* with a feeling of nausea, and turns again to the story of the Austrian Magdalena and her father for new faith in humanity, new trust in the value of personal worth, and new confidence in the eternal fitness of things.

Anzengruber always leaves us with the words of Goethe cheering us on our way, only that the words seem sung by our fellows instead of by angels : —

Wer immer strebend sich bemüht,
Den können wir erlösen.¹

¹ Whoe'er aspires unweariedly
Is not beyond redeeming.

— *Faust II*, Act V, 7. Translation by Bayard Taylor.

CHAPTER XIII

CONCLUSION

THE NINETEENTH CENTURY IN THE LIGHT AND SHADOW OF THE GENIUS OF GOETHE

Ihr könnt mir immer ungescheut
Mit Blüchern Denkmal setzen,
Von Franzen hat er Euch befreit,
Ich von Philisternetzen. — GOETHE.

IT were foolish to extol the life and works of Goethe as the supreme consummation of German national character and German national endeavor. Great as Goethe was, he was not so great that one may measure the width and breadth and depth of German national worth by the standard of his individuality and by the gauge of its literary expression.

The attempt has been made. It led to the coining of the term *Goethereif* by enthusiastic admirers. For years this term passed current. The genuine obverse was carefully held to view, the doubtful reverse as carefully hid from sight. Youthful critics of German social values at first refused to accept the term at its face value. Like the Young Germans of the third decade, they were sceptical of the standard which it set as most modern and most national. They turned the word-coin in curiosity or doubt, and found on its reverse the mint-sign of aristocracy. Loudly they proclaimed their find, and for a time discredited the Goethe-unit of national worth. Then the magic word "socialism" was discovered in the scroll of the reverse. All was well again. *Goethereif* was redeemed from suspicion. Obverse spelled "democracy," reverse "socialism"; the word-coin was "social-democracy." Of a truth, *Goethereif* was redeemed with a vengeance.

We, perhaps, can afford to smile at these results of zealous partisanship and of anxious endeavor to canonize a great life and its great gifts to humanity. Yet with the smile there must come thoughts that sadden.

For a whole century a people struggles to climb to the heights of democratic freedom, passes through hardships and sufferings more poignant than its neighbors experience, toils on and plods on in patient endurance, suppressing the weary anguish of its travail — and at the end of the century we seem to see it slipping back to the old base of aristocratic privilege and willing to intrust itself once more to aristocratic leadership. Doubts arise as to the possible value of democratic ideals. The standards and attainments of society fall so far short of the ideals of democracy that we begin to question the stanchness of even our own ship of state and the reliability of the motive power that impels and guides it on its course. The words of Goethe, the aristocrat, seem charged with weighty significance: "Nothing is more odious than the majority; for it consists of a few strong leaders, of rascals who accommodate themselves, of weaklings who assimilate themselves, and of the mass that rolls along in the rear without knowing in the least what it wants."

The fatuous effort of a few Germans to make the life-work of a single man the test of true manhood, and the willingness on the part of many Germans to submit to such a test of their mental powers and social faculties, is not a sign that promises an early garnering of the fruits which the nineteenth century matured. To acknowledge greatness and to profit by it is the part of self-respecting manhood, to treat greatness — though it be the greatness of Goethe — as Germans have been urged to do, is the part of servility. Goethe, the sworn foe of every form of *philistinism*, through his greatness came to be the main prop of senseless authority and one of the negative forces in the waning nineteenth century.

For the greater part of the century Goethe was not a positive influence in the national affairs of his country. He appeared as one standing aloof, criticising in disdainful indifference with

the air of conscious conceit. To raise Goethe into popular favor was not an easy task. It became necessary to establish as a fact his sympathy for the great problems of national development which enlisted the best endeavors of progressive minds in the course of the century.

Goethe was privileged to live through the period of national awakening, to observe the first signs of civic unrest, and to foresee the portentous significance of industrialism. The three great phases of democratic activity through which his people passed in the course of the nineteenth century, were bared to his vision. But his heart knew them not. He never recognized the democratic impulse that was changing the complexion of political, civic, and social life.

Goethe had no faith in the popular movement that freed Germany from the grasp of Napoleon, and when the victory was won, he did not write the lines of the dramatic sketch that was to celebrate the victory, out of warm and compelling enthusiasm. *The Awakening of Epimenides* was only a thoughtful allegory.

Goethe had no faith in popular government, and when Napoleon put a forcible end to mob rule, Goethe was ready to credit him with the true solution of popular revolt. He never finished *The Natural Daughter*, a drama in which he had purposed to suggest the way out of revolution.

Goethe had no faith in the progressive and constructive forces inherent in industrialism, and with profound dread of the new order of society which the future threatened to evolve, he wrote his study of state-socialism, *The Wanderings of William Meister*.

Why claim for Goethe what he never possessed and never could possess, sympathetic appreciation of the new source of inspiration which the nineteenth century was uncovering and purifying in the hearts and minds of his countrymen! Goethe was a man of the eighteenth century, a grand example of self-poised individuality, a superb exponent of enlightened aristocracy. He was all his days a champion of autocratic paternalism and of that principle of aristocracy which he once put into the

words: "Reason will always be the possession only of the superior few. It will never become popular."

And yet, to relegate Goethe to the eighteenth century, Goethe, who had such a quick and sane comprehension of the actualities of life and their progressive development, Goethe, who was one of the first expounders of evolution as a theory of development from within, is not wholly just. His lack of sympathy for democratic initiative was not due to mere prejudice. Had conditions promised rational popular activity, he would have been the last to place obstacles in the way of this activity, and perhaps one of the first to welcome its assertion. It was Goethe who wrote of the French Revolution:—

Denn wer leugnet es wohl, dass hoch sich das Herz ihm erhoben,
Ihm die freiere Brust mit reineren Pulsen geschlagen,
Als sich der erste Glanz der neuen Sonne erhob,
Als man hörte vom Rechte der Menschen, das allen gemein ist,
Von der begeisternden Freiheit und von der löblichen Gleichheit!
Damals hoffte ein jeder sich selbst zu leben.—¹

And it was Goethe who, in the face of accomplished facts, admitted in *The Awakening of Epimenides*:—

Es erschallt nun Gottes Stimme,
Denn des Volkes Stimme sie erschallt!²

Goethe had no horror of democracy. To mob rule he had an unspeakable aversion. In his day the mob and the demos came so near being identical, that Goethe may well be pardoned for

¹ Who will pretend to deny that his heart swelled high in his bosom,
And that his freer breast with purer pulses was beating,
When we beheld the new sun arise in his earliest splendor,
When of the rights of men we heard, which to all should be common,
Were of a righteous equality told, and inspiring freedom?
Every one hoped that then he should live his own life.—

— *Hermann und Dorothea: Klio. Das Zeitalter.*
Translation by ELLEN FROTHINGHAM.

² And now the voice of God is heard,
For heard the People's voice is now!

— *Des Epimenides Erwachen.*

making no distinction. He had no illusions as to the faults of the governing classes, but he had also no illusions as to the irrationality of action instigated and pursued by the untutored mass. In three plays, *Der Bürger General*, *Der Gross-Kophta*, and *Die Aufgeregten*, he flayed the excesses of the mob, the moral depravity of the higher classes, and the errors of high and low as responsible for the follies of society. He was not one of those who held solely the people responsible for the terrors of revolution. "The people — he remarked to his friend Eckermann — may indeed be oppressed, but never suppressed, and the revolutionary uprisings of the lower classes are the result of injustice practised by the great."

That Goethe should have maintained his faith in aristocratic initiative was partly eighteenth-century bias, but for the greater part hard common sense. Goethe could not do otherwise than mistrust the German populace. It was uneducated both in mental culture and moral reasoning. It had always been controlled and always been led. Self-control and leadership were not to be predicated of it. The few were cultured, the few were familiar with the processes of moral reasoning, the few were accustomed to rule and guide the destinies of the many. To impress these few with the responsibility of their position seemed to offer an easier and more rational solution of the problem than to undertake the civic education of the great mass.

Had not Goethe lived for nearly half a century under the influence of eighteenth-century thought and conditions, had not his official duties in the small duchy of Saxe-Weimar put him in a position where he himself was constantly called on to give of his best to the inhabitants without ever receiving or expecting to receive from them suggestions or assistance, he might have found that faith in democracy which we vainly seek in his life and writings. And had he found it, he would have given to posterity an analysis of democracy and a study of its first principles that would have made his influence greater and more beneficial.

But what right has the critic to make such a statement in the

face of the actual attitude of Goethe? The right that is implied in the true life-work of the great German thinker and poet and is expressed in his ideal of manhood: —

Denn es lebt ein ewig Leben,
Es ist selbst der *ganze* Mann,
In ihm wirken *Lust* and *Streben*,
Die man nicht zermalmen kann.¹

Undoubtedly Goethe assigned the general realization of this ideal by the people to aristocratic agencies. That does not make it any less the bed-rock of democratic institutions. Unquestionably it was aristocratic in its origin. It is none the less a tenet of democracy.

One of the views that brings Goethe to the very threshold of democracy was his supreme regard for and interpretation of education. When the conquest of Germany was accomplished by Napoleon, Goethe was willing to accept the fact and even anxious that his countrymen should submit to political servitude. The growing unrest throughout the country, which threatened a national uprising, so troubled him that he could be reconciled to the death of his noble friend, Schiller, inasmuch as Schiller was spared the disappointments which Goethe anticipated. And what was it that Goethe feared? Not defeat of the German armies. Of that he felt perfectly assured. He admired Napoleon as an elemental force, as a man of destiny. But he would willingly have seen Germany freed from Napoleonic domination, if—and in this *if* lay the substance of Goethe's fears—if it could have been brought about without the ravages of war. The blessings of culture he knew to be attainable only in peace, and the blessings of culture he held indispensable to collective well-being. The supreme admonition that Goethe felt called to press home in *The Awakening of Epimenides*, when Napoleon had been exiled to Elba, was this: —

¹ For there is a life unending
It is e'en the *perfect* man,
Active, joyous, e'er contending,
Crush him? No, you never can!

— *Des Epimenides Erwachen.*

Wer dann das *Innere* begehrt,
Der ist schon gross und reich
Zusammenhaltet Euren Wert,
Und Euch ist niemand gleich.¹

The same fear of the degrading effect of unstable conditions took hold of Goethe when, toward the close of the second decade, the first symptoms of the civic revolt of 1848 began to be noticeable. Goethe desired stable conditions that the influence of education might tell upon the people and the value of educational forces be more generally recognized. Education he held to be something more than enlightenment and something more than emancipation from the dead letter of the law. It was enlightenment put into practice. "Everything that emancipates our minds without giving us control over ourselves is pernicious," were words of sterling import.

When the rising tide of industrialism began to lap along the shores of civic and social life, foreboding a flood that might wash away the landmarks of civic integrity and social morality, Goethe again called upon the agencies of education to control and make subservient to higher needs the material forces of modern economic evolution. *The Wanderings of William Meister* would perhaps have been a better work of art and a worthier study of modern civilization, had it not been warped to the aristocratic bent of Goethe's sympathies. State-socialism seemed to the disciple of aristocracy the only rational method of utilizing democratic forces. He would indeed be an extreme partisan who could not admit that Goethe's *educational province* is an essentially aristocratic institution. In order to train each member of society to serve the needs of all, Goethe found it necessary to set an arbitrary power over the individual. This power presumes to guide his destiny, to determine the quality of his energies, and to direct his faculties along lines that it assumes to be for the communal good. The guiding power is

¹ Who then seeks *strength of soul* to gain,
Has wealth and greatness true ;
Your worth in *unison* maintain,
And none shall rival you.

only another form of that enlightened despotism for which Goethe stood sponsor to the end of his days. But in the community itself there exists no caste, no privileged class, no right of seniority, no inherited wealth or special opportunities. All have the same chance to make their natural worth tell for the good of others and themselves. This curious blending of aristocratic control and democratic privilege has done much to befog the real issue of German social democracy.

However, Goethe propounded a decidedly democratic principle when he insisted on the education of the masses through the development of individual faculties. Not mere knowledge, but the power to apply knowledge, was the goal Goethe set for educated citizenship. Discarding normalized education, except in the simplest rudiments of language and arithmetic, Goethe demanded specialized training in the arts and sciences. Adaptation of education to the peculiar needs of each individual and correlation of individual education to the common good, were two principles which Goethe asserted to be inseparable. In *The Wanderings of William Meister* the education of the leading few was supplanted by the education of the productive mass, and the training of the mental and moral faculties of the many through vitalized processes was proclaimed as the foundation of all social progress.

But the fight which Goethe made for personal independence and large personal ideals told far more for permanent good than any specific theories of political, civic, or social progress which he advanced in the course of a long life. In his theories Goethe was forever an aristocrat. In his fight for enlightened independence he was thoroughly democratic. His theories were concerned with others, his fight was the expression of his inmost being. Goethe's theories counted for very little in the enfranchisement of Germany; Goethe's fight for true manhood emancipated his countrymen.

When Heine said of Goethe that he had destroyed German philistinism, he was perhaps premature. Now, after the century has closed, the statement of Heine expresses most fully the great glory of the life-work of Goethe. This result of his life-

work made him, in very truth, a national figure in the nineteenth century and for the nineteenth century. With equal conviction and persuasive powers, no poet has sung into German hearts the joy and eternal glory of perpetual, unremitting striving for higher goals and still higher goals. The song of Goethe's *Faust* is the song of Goethe's life and the song of German progress.

Few countries there are in which the fight against philistinism was of more serious moment than in Germany, and hardly an age in which it meant more than in the nineteenth century. Through his crusade, Goethe, the aristocrat, weakened the supports of aristocratic prejudice and senseless authority. Goethe led the forces that filled in the stagnant moat of supineness and indifference. Goethe stormed the strongholds of soulless rationalism and superstitious dogmatism. Goethe proclaimed the right, but also the duty, of the individual to enlarge his horizon and to transfuse the commonplace with the joy of aspiring manhood. *Philistinism* characterizes all those phases of German life which signified submission to deadening routine, and activity without aspiration. It suggests pettiness of living and erudition without sympathetic culture. It implies credulity and not faith, weariness and not hope, dull pessimism and not thoughtful optimism, inertia and not initiative. The plaintive cry of philistinism is the cry of infancy or of senility, the cry for the supporting arms of the parent, or the cry for the rest of indolence. Goethe spurned both. With relentless hand he shut the door on senile philistinism of the eighteenth century, and with stern voice he bade the infant nineteenth century cease its wail and trust its own young strength.

Goethe's *Faust* had its source in the aversion of the poet to every form of eighteenth-century philistinism. But when Goethe concluded his great poem it had become a summons to the nineteenth century to recognize the only law of human progress—self-reliance. Ever aspiring, ever trusting in the potential ability of our being, ever growing in strength through the putting forth of strength—that is the redemption of life

from the curse of philistinism to the blessing of perfected manhood.

Democratic? — What could be more so! .Open your eyes — Goethe exclaims — to human life. Study its meaning, grasp its possibilities, coördinate your efforts to the ideal tendencies which you discover, draw your inspiration from the vision you may gain of its best energies as they work in rational unison. Then shall your striving be rewarded. For it shall carry with it and in it the joy of doing. And it was Goethe who recognized the democracy of his ideal of perfected manhood. For it was Goethe who let the ever striving Faust see the glory of his redemption in the significance of his living for communal life. And the words with which Faust, the great anti-philistine, concludes his career, contain the promise of all that Goethe hoped for and cherished as the destiny of social beings : —

Ein Sumpf zieht am Gebirge hin,
Verpestet alles schon Errungene;
Den faulen Sumpf auch abzuziehn,
Das Letzte wär' das Höchsterrungene.
Eröffn' ich Räume vielen Millionen,
Nicht sicher zwar, doch *thätig-frei* zu wohnen.
Grün das Gefilde, fruchtbar; Mensch und Heerde
Sogleich behaglich auf der neuen Erde,
Gleich angesiedelt an des Hügels Kraft,
Den aufgewälzt *kühn-emsig* Völkerschaft.
Im Innern hier ein *paradiesisch* Land,
Da rase draussen Flut bis auf zum Rand,
Und wie sie nascht, gewaltsam einzuschiessen,
Gemeindrang eilt, die Lücke zu verschliessen.
Ja! diesem Sinne bin ich ganz ergeben,
Das ist der Weisheit letzter Schluss:
*Nur der verdient sich Freiheit wie das Leben,
Der täglich sie erobern muss.*
Und so verbringt, umrungen von Gefahr,
Hier Kindheit, Mann und Greis sein *tüchtig* Jahr.
Solch ein *Gewimmel* möcht' ich sehn,
Auf *freiem* Grund mit *freiem* Volke stehn.
Zum Augenblicke dürft' ich sagen:
Verweile doch, du bist so schön!
Es kann die Spur von meinen Erdentagen
Nicht in Aeonen untergehn.—

Im Vorgefühl von solchem hohen Glück
Geniess' ich jetzt den höchsten Augenblick.¹

Democracy as the end and substance of individual striving, democracy as the imperishable product of joyous aspiration surging in every human breast, democracy as the inspiration of true unselfishness, as the equalization of the individual and society and the emancipation of the individual in society — to it the aged Goethe looked forward. And in so far as he speeded the coming day through his life-long fight for joyous activity against inert philistinism, in so far it may be said of Goethe :—

Es kann die Spur von meinen Erdentagen
Nicht in Aeonen untergehn.

¹ Below the hills a marshy plain
Infects what I so long have been retrieving ;
The stagnant pool likewise to drain
Were now my latest and my best achieving.
To many millions let me furnish soil,
Though not secure, yet *free to active toil* ;
Green, fertile fields, where men and herds go forth
At once, with comfort, on the newest Earth,
And swiftly settled on the hill's firm base,
Created by the *bold, industrious* race.
A land like Paradise here, round about ;
Up to the brink the tide may roar without,
And though it gnaw, to burst with force the limit,
By *common impulse* all unite to hem it.
Yes, to this thought I hold with firm persistence ;
The last result of wisdom stamps it true :
He only earns his freedom and existence,
Who daily conquers them anew.
Thus here, by dangers girt, shall glide away
Of childhood, manhood, age, the *vigorous* day :
And such a *throng* I fain would see, —
Stand on *free* soil among a people *free* !
Then dared I hail the moment fleeing :
“ Ah, still delay — thou art so fair ! ”
The traces cannot, of my earthly being,
In æons perish, — they are there ! —
In proud fore-feeling of such lofty bliss,
I now enjoy the highest Moment, — this !

— *Faust II: Grosser Vorhof des Palastes*, Act V. 6.
Last words of Faust. Translation by BAYARD TAYLOR.

And in so far the life and works of Goethe will stand as a beacon-light for future generations.

Goethe's *Faust* begins with a bitter protest against abstract scholarship and the isolation of the individual from the teeming life of his environment: —

Habe nun, ach! Philosophie,
Juristerei und Medizin,
Und, leider! auch Theologie
Durchaus studiert mit heissem Bemühn.
Da steh' ich nun, ich armer Thor!
Und bin so klug als wie zuvor.¹

The typical exponent of eighteenth-century philistinism has found that his lonely student-ardor offers no satisfying reward. From his previous world-flight he now turns back to the world and strives to come in touch with its *active* principle. He believes that he has found this principle and, in the buoyant hopefulness of a convert, he imagines that he can at once possess himself thereof: —

Mir wird so licht!
Ich schau in diesen reinen Zügen
Die wirkende Natur vor meiner Seele liegen.
Jetzt erst erkenn' ich, was der Weise spricht:
"Die Geisterwelt ist nicht verschlossen;
"Dein Sinn ist zu, dein Herz ist tot!
"Auf, bade, Schüler, unverdrossen
"Die ird'sche Brust im Morgenrot!"²

¹ I've studied now Philosophy
And Jurisprudence, Medicine —
And even, alas! Theology —
From end to end, with labor keen;
And here, poor fool! with all my love
I stand, no wiser than before. — *Faust I: Nacht.*

Translation by BAYARD TAYLOR.

² So clear mine eyes!
In these pure features I behold
Creative Nature to my soul unfold.
What says the sage, now first I recognize:
"The spirit-world no closures fasten;
Thy sense is shut, thy heart is dead:
Disciple, up! untiring, hasten
To bathe thy breast in morning-red!" — *Ibid.* (TAYLOR.)

But the possession of the inspiring principle of human activity is not so easily gained, nor is it as readily defined as Faust assumes. He summons the Earth-Spirit and listens with eager enthusiasm to his words, which meant even to the poet who wrote them little more than they did to the listening Faust: —

In Lebensfluten, im Thatensturm
Wall' ich auf und ab,
Webe hin und her!
Geburt und Grab,
Ein ewiges Meer,
Ein wechselnd Weben,
Ein glühend Leben,
So schaff' ich am sausenden Webstuhl der Zeit
Und wirke der Gottheit lebendiges Kleid.¹

The substance of the words is like an indefinable essence which stimulates, but does not energize. Therefore the enthusiastic exclamation of Faust: —

Der du die weite Welt umschweifst,
Geschäftiger Geist, wie nah fühl' ich mich dir! —²

is met by the stern reproach of the Spirit: —

Du gleichst dem Geist, den du begreifst,
Nicht mir!³

Faust is left in despair.

¹ In the tides of Life, in Action's storm,
A fluctuant wave,
A shuttle free,
Birth and the Grave,
An eternal Sea,
A weaving, flowing
Life, all-glowing,
Thus at Time's humming loom 'tis my hand prepares
The garment of Life which the Deity wears! — *Faust I: Nacht.*
Translation by BAYARD TAYLOR.

² Thou, who around the wide world wendest,
Thou busy Spirit, how near I feel to thee! — *Faust I: Ibid.*
Translation by BAYARD TAYLOR.

³ Thou'rt like the Spirit which thou comprehendest,
Not me! — *Faust I: Ibid.*
Translation by BAYARD TAYLOR.

It was a happy thought that caused Goethe to contrast Faust at this moment with Wagner, to compare the man blindly groping his way back into life with the inveterate philistine. Faust turns in disgust from the speculations of his former friend and colleague. These speculations appear so worthless now: —

Wie nur dem Kopf nicht alle Hoffnung schwindet,
Der immerfort an schalem Zeuge klebt,
Mit gier'ger Hand nach Schätzen gräbt,
Und froh ist, wenn er Regenwürme findet.¹

There follows the well-known story of the undoing of Faust. His new passion for living forms drives him forth into life and burdens him with guilt. The tragic end of Gretchen *seems* to fill the measure of wrong which his misguided desire plucks on every side, and Mephistopheles *seems* to claim him as his own. However, the guilt of Faust is not the result of wantonness.

It is possible and even probable that the first conception of Goethe's theme recognized no redemption for Faust. But in his maturer years, Goethe knew that Faust had sinned not out of evil intent. He had sinned because his aspiring nature could not find the path it ought to follow. The redemption of Faust, accordingly, became the theme of a Second Part of the poem, and this redemption is not brought about through the finding of the ideal. The redemption of Faust is the finding of the path that leads ultimately to a clearer perception of the *manifestations* of the eternal principle of activity. This path Faust cannot find and does not find until he gives up his quest for the ideal.

In Part I, the ideal was reflected in the mirror of lust and passion: —

Lass mich nur schnell noch in den Spiegel schauen!
Das Frauenbild war gar zu schön!²

¹ Strange he alone by Hope should still be haunted
Who clings to trash, and hath no higher scope —
Who doth with greedy hand for treasure grope,
And, when he finds an earthworm, is enchanted. — *Faust I: Ibid.*
Translation by THOMAS E. WEBB.

² One rapid glance within the mirror give me!
How beautiful that woman-form! — *Faust I: Hexenküche.*
Translation by BAYARD TAYLOR.

In Part II it is first shown to Faust, as a tempting bait, in the shadowy form of Helena, the type of sensual beauty which Faust summons from the "Mothers." It is then made the substance of his quest in the Classical Walpurgis Night, when under the guidance of an artificial reconstruction of life (*Homunculus*) by recondite philistinism (Wagner), Faust plunges into the lore of antiquity. Thereafter, possession of the antique ideal reconstructed by modern thought is vouchsafed him by Mephistopheles, in order that Faust may be confirmed in his folly and be kept from seeking the path to redemption which lies close to his course. And finally, when the insistent pressure of the reality deprives Faust of this temporary possession, he is urged by Mephistopheles, disguised as Phorkyas, to cling to the garment of Helena: —

Halte fest, was dir von Allem übrig blieb !
 Das Kleid, lass es nicht los ! Da zupfen schon
 Dämonen an den Zipfeln, möchten gern
 Zur Unterwelt es reißen. Halte fest !
 Die Göttin ist's nicht mehr, die du verlorst,
 Doch göttlich ist's. Bediene dich der hohen,
 Unschätzbarn Gunst und hebe dich empor !
 Es trägt dich über alles Gemeine rasch
 Am Aether hin, so lang du dauern kannst.¹

The power of Mephistopheles over Faust is dependent on his ability to lure Faust from active life and keep him fascinated by theoretical constructions.

But the efforts of Mephistopheles unwittingly reveal a great truth. The quest for the ideal has kept and will keep Faust

¹ Hold fast what now alone remains to thee !
 The garment let not go ! Already twitch
 The Demons at its skirts, and they would fain
 To the Nether Regions drag it ! Hold it fast !
 It is no more the Goddess thou hast lost,
 But godlike is it. For thy use employ
 The grand and priceless gift, and soar aloft !
 'Twill bear thee swift from all things mean and low
 To ether high, so long thou canst endure.

— *Faust II*: Act III. 3.

Translation by BAYARD TAYLOR.

from perdition, though it cannot save him. With each new attempt Faust has come nearer to the possession, not of an absolute ideal, but of a true inspiration. Helena, the *strength* of beauty, has finally been his.

The union of Faust and Helena, and the child of this union, Euphorion, have called forth almost endless speculation. To suggest a new interpretation of the allegory can do no harm and may, perchance, throw some light on the profound significance of the poem.

An analysis of the character and figure of Helena seems to justify the conclusion that Goethe intended to embody in Helena Schiller's conception of *Grace and Dignity* (Anmut und Würde). Helena would then be the ethical ideal formulated by modern thought out of elements of antiquity to meet the needs of modern life. Euphorion, the fruit of the union of Faust and Helena, is, however, a romantically useless product. Noble as the reconstructed ethical ideal of antiquity may be and even divine in its possibilities for inspiration, it cannot redeem modern life. Coupled with the indefinite aspirations of Faust it produces forms that disregard the realities. For the ideal has itself been developed in disregard of modern facts and by negation of the real. Therefore, Faust is not redeemed through his union with Helena, and Euphorion is not the new life-form which the present is to bring forth. Theories of life are not sufficient to redeem the individual or to chasten existence.

In all these efforts (in Part II) to possess himself of the ideal content of life, Faust has, however, unconsciously been feeling his way out of the darkness of theory into the light of human activity, and from the moment when he alights from the mantle of Helena the activities of life claim him. Through active striving he begins to realize his redemption. Selfish at first in his new activity, he learns that the full blessing of active aspiration is not the pleasure of gratified ambition. It is true that with each new effort to redeem the life of others according to his own ideas Faust takes a step in his own redemption and frees himself by just so much from the influence of

Mephistopheles. But not until Faust conceives his doing as an inspiration for others to aspire in their own strength, and as an unselfish reflection of the principle that is active in life, and not as a *gift* to others prompted wholly by personal volition, not until then is his earthly redemption achieved and his freedom from Mephistopheles secured. Life assumes a new significance as Faust learns to comprehend that *it* harbors the ideal.

In the early stages of Faust's career Mephistopheles had answered his query, "Who art thou?" with the words:—

Ein Teil von jener Kraft
Die stets das Böse will, das Gute schafft,
Ich bin der Geist, der stets verneint!¹

The more distinctly Faust discerns the affirmation of ideal elements in the passing forms of the reality, the weaker grows the hold of Mephistopheles. The earthly redemption of Faust is complete when the great vision of the democracy of human life comes to him as the reward of his activity. Mephistopheles has lost his victim. Out of negation Faust has won his way to affirmation, and the quest for an absolute ideal has given place to the joyful recognition of the potential strength that inheres in life and transforms the world of appearances into ever new and more perfect forms of the great ideal—the divine.

In this manner the principle of individual redemption is made the principle of social redemption.

Wer immer strebend sich bemüht,
Den können wir erlösen —²

are words which, at close of the career of Faust, are applied to society. And this is the mission that Goethe's *Faust*, as the best and fullest expression of the life and work of Goethe, must have for Germany of the coming decades:—

¹ Part of that Power, not understood,
Which always wills the Bad, and always works the Good.
I am the Spirit that Denies! — *Faust I: Studirzimmer.*

Translation by BAYARD TAYLOR.

² Whoe'er aspires unweariedly
Is not beyond redeeming.

Nur der verdient sich Freiheit wie das Leben,
Der täglich sie erobern muss.¹

And with these words of Goethe the present STUDIES OF GERMAN LITERATURE IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY may well be concluded. It may be that the vision of the aged Goethe shall be justified by the future development of the German nation, and that a sturdy, self-reliant citizenship shall some day discard the leading-strings of bureaucratic government. Certain it is that in our own democracy we can ill afford to sacrifice the ideal of individual initiative supported by rational insight and inspired by the joy of doing, to any theory of autocratic leadership. The industrial problems that hang dark over our land will not be dispelled by any theory of "Christian ownership" or by any organizations of the interests of labor, capital, or consumer which disregard the great principle of democracy. Least of all will state-socialism bring us nearer to the realization of the noble vision of the society of the future. Organization of particular social interests is, at most, a seeking for the path that leads to social redemption; the construction of a socialistic government is, however, comparable only to the Mephistophelean folly of Faust in quest of an absolute ideal.

¹ He only earns his freedom and existence
Who daily conquers them anew !

APPENDIX

In the list of references given in the following three groups, general or encyclopædic works which do not consider German History and Literature of the nineteenth century as an essential part of their scheme have been omitted. The aim has been to give a *selected* list of the sources from which the author has drawn. In no case must the bibliography be considered complete, particularly not in Group III. Goedeke's *Grundriss zur Geschichte der Deutschen Dichtung* (last edition, not yet complete), contains the best bibliography of German authors. For biographical sketches the reader is referred to *Allgemeine Deutsche Biographie*.

I

POLITICAL, CIVIC, SOCIAL CONDITIONS

(In the Nineteenth Century)

- Deutsche Geschichte im neunzehnten Jahrhundert.* By Heinrich von Treitschke. Leipzig, 1879-1894. [Written with considerable bias in favor of the Prussian principle of state. Contains many references to literary men and rather didactic discussions of their works. Otherwise noteworthy.]
- Historische und politische Aufsätze.* By Heinrich von Treitschke. Leipzig, 1886. [See previous note.]
- Das Deutsche Volkstum.* By Hans Meyer. Leipzig u. Wien, 1898. [Suggestive, but enthusiastic.]
- Die geistigen und socialen Strömungen des neunzehnten Jahrhunderts.* By Theobald Ziegler. Berlin, 1900. [An excellent, thoughtful, temperate discussion.]
- Das Deutsche Jahrhundert.* 2 vols. A series of rather diffuse essays on various phases of German life, edited by George Stockhausen. Berlin, 1901. [The view taken is narrowly patriotic. Glorification of Teutonism. Readable.]
- Germany and the Germans.* 2 vols. By W. H. Dawson. New York (Appleton), 1894. [Contains facts of German civilization presented in an interesting manner for the general reader. Critical perspective not sufficiently clear.]
- Zur jüngsten deutschen Vergangenheit.* 2 vols. By Karl Lamprecht. Berlin, 1902. Supplement to Lamprecht's *Deutsche Geschichte*. [Admirable in its correlation of artistic and social phenomena.]
- Die deutsche Volkswirtschaft im neunzehnten Jahrhundert.* By Werner Schubart. Berlin, 1902. [A fair discussion of economic conditions.]

- Geschichte der Deutschen Einheitsbewegung im neunzehnten Jahrhundert.* By R. Goette. Gotha, 1891-. [Discusses lucidly and at length the forces that made for imperial unity and their significance.]
- Aus dem Leben Theodor von Bernhardis.* 8 parts. Leipzig, 1893-1901. Reminiscences, diary, memoirs, letters, etc., of Bernhardi. [Important for any study of the internal development of Germany in the first six decades.]
- Cotta.* By Albert Schäffle. Berlin, 1895. [Shows the influence exerted by the founder of modern German Journalism. An indispensable work for the student of German civic life.]
- Studies in Napoleonic Statesmanship: Germany.* By H. A. L. Fischer. Oxford (Clarendon Press), 1903. [The beneficial influence of Napoleon upon the civic enlightenment of Germany is here for the first time discussed dispassionately and with clearness.]
- Friedrich Perthes Leben.* 3 vols. By Clemens Theodor Perthes. Gotha, 1872. [Compares with the works on Bernhardi and Cotta. Shows the deep undercurrent of German civic thought as gauged by the experiences of a liberal-minded publisher.]
- Fünfundzwanzig Jahre deutscher Geschichte.* (1815-1840.) 2 vols. By Karl Biedermann. Breslau, 1899. [Contains a wealth of facts, well arranged.]
- Das Leben des Ministers Freiherrn von Stein.* 6 vols. By G. H. Pertz. Berlin, 1850-1855. [Essential for the study of the political reconstruction of Germany and its relation to civic emancipation.]
- Life and Times of Stein.* 3 vols. By J. R. Seeley. Cambridge, England (University Press), 1878. Boston (Roberts Bros.), 1879. [See previous note.]
- Germany, Past and Present.* 2 vols. By Baring-Gould. London, 1879. [One of the best studies, written in English, of the general development of German life.]
- Bismarck und seine Zeit.* 6 vols. By Hans Blum. München, 1894-1895. Supplement and Index Volumes. München, 1899. [A standard work on the rise of Germany to the position of a world-power.]
- Gedanken und Erinnerungen.* By Otto Fürst von Bismarck. Stuttgart, 1898-1901. English edition, New York (Harpers), 1899. [The story of the part played by Bismarck in the upbuilding of the German Empire, told by himself. Important on account of the side lights it inevitably throws on his conception of democracy.]
- Bismarck Regesten.* 2 vols. By Horst Kohl. Leipzig, 1891. [A detailed list of the official acts and government reforms, etc., influenced or proposed by Bismarck.]
- Bismarck Denkwürdigkeiten.* By Paul Lindau. Berlin, 1899. [A critical estimate of Bismarck's influence on German thought and ideals. Often just in its negative attitude.]

- Zehn Jahre Deutscher Kämpfe.* (1865-1875.) By Heinrich von Treitschke. Brought down to the close of the eighth decade in 2^d ed. Berlin, 1879. [Written with small appreciation of the meaning of modern problems. See note to Treitschke's German History.]
- The Refounding of the German Empire, 1848-1871.* By George Bruce Malleson. New York (Scribners), 1893. [The story of the political and civic reconstruction of Germany. Social problems are not given proper consideration.]
- Der Emanzipationskampf des Vierten Standes.* 2 vols. By R. Meyer. Berlin, 1888. [On the whole, one of the best general discussions of the problems of German industrialism.]
- Geisteshelden.* A series of excellent biographies, being a continuation of the series *Führende Geister*. Edited by Anton Bettelheim. Berlin, 1895-. [The series is most enlightening. The discussions of leading men of all times reveal the catholic temper of German scholarship at its best.]
- Vorträge und Aufsätze zur Geschichte des geistigen Lebens in Deutschland und Oesterreich.* By Wilhelm Scherer. Berlin, 1874. [Like all of Scherer's writings most instructive and suggestive.]
- Volksbildung und Wissenschaft in Deutschland während des letzten Jahrhunderts.* By J. B. Meyer. 1886. [Contains some important facts and observations regarding public school education.]
- Am Sterbelager des Jahrhunderts. Blicke eines freien Denkers aus der Zeit in die Zeit.* By Ludwig Büchner. Giessen, 1898. [Of interest are chapters VIII to XIII.]
- Hundert Jahre Zeitgeist in Deutschland.* 2 vols. By Julius Duboc. Leipzig, 1889-1893. [Romantic in its generalizations, but interesting and suggestive.]
- Die Kulturperioden des neunzehnten Jahrhunderts.* By Georg Grupp. Frankfurt, 1896. [Of considerable value to the student of German thought and civilization.]
- Das neunzehnte Jahrhundert: Geschichte seiner idealen, nationalen und Kulturentwicklung.* By Friedrich Schmidt-Weissenfels. Berlin, 1899.
- Deutschlands Leben und Streben im neunzehnten Jahrhundert.* By Ludwig Salomon. Stuttgart, 1893.

II

LITERARY HISTORY

(In the Nineteenth Century)

- A History of German Literature. As Determined by Social Forces.* By Kuno Francke. Being 4th ed. of *Social Forces in German Literature*. New York (Holt & Co.) 1901. [A trenchant, condensed review of German Literature from its earliest beginnings to the close of the nineteenth

century. Mentioned here because the author of these STUDIES owes much of his inspiration to Professor Francke's volume. It should be in the hands of every American student of German literature.]

Geschichte der deutschen Litteratur von Leibniz bis auf unsere Zeit. (1814-1866.) 5 vols. By Julian Schmidt. Berlin, 1896. [Frequently didactic and unreasonably academic, but a noteworthy account.]

Die Hauptströmungen in der Litteratur des neunzehnten Jahrhunderts. 6 parts. By Georg Brandes. Translated into German by Strodtmann. 5th ed., Berlin, 1895. English translation of Parts I, II, III. New York (Macmillan). [Part I: *The Romantic School in Germany*, and Part VI: *Young Germany*, are of special interest. Like most of the writings of Brandes, this work often distorts minor facts to substantiate the author's bias.]

Die deutsche Litteratur des neunzehnten Jahrhunderts. By R. M. Meyer. Berlin, 1900. [On the whole, the best treatment of German literature in the nineteenth century. Full of brilliant conceptions regarding individual writers, it lacks a critical perspective of the entire period surveyed.]

Die deutsche Nationallitteratur vom Tode Goethes bis auf die Gegenwart. By Adolf Stern. Marburg u. Leipzig, 1886. New edition, enlarged and revised. Marburg u. Leipzig, 1897. [In a small volume the attempt at a critical perspective is made, without sufficient sympathetic appreciation of most recent literary phenomena.]

Die moderne Literatur in Gruppen und Einzeldarstellungen. By Arthur Moeller-Bruch. Berlin u. Leipzig, 1899-1902. [Combines the methods of R. M. Meyer and A. Stern.]

Literatur und Gesellschaft im neunzehnten Jahrhundert. By S. Lublinski. Berlin, 1899. [An ambitious attempt. In some respects superior to the work of Brandes.]

Die deutsche Literatur der Gegenwart. By A. Bartels. Leipzig, 1897. [Cannot be said to be a successful interpretation of the naturalistic revolt of the last decades.]

Geschichte der neuesten deutschen Literatur von 1830 bis auf die Gegenwart. By Heinrich Kurz. Leipzig, 1873. [Contains short biographical sketches and selections from the authors discussed.]

Geschichte der deutschen Litteratur der Gegenwart. By Eugen Wolff. Leipzig, 1896. [Vague.]

Moderne Klassiker. Deutsche Literaturgeschichte der neueren Zeit in Biographien, Kritiken, und Proben. By Adolf Ruge. Cassel, 1854. [Contains many just criticisms of writers in the first half of the century, and deserves to be quoted more frequently than has been the case.]

Probleme und Charakterköpfe. Studien zur Litteratur unserer Zeit. By Jeannot Emil Freiherr v. Grotthuss. Stuttgart, 1898. [Useful as a reference book and for supplementary study.]

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